The Middlebury Campus

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English and American Literatures Department to be renamed English Department

By RILEY BOARD
Editor in Chief

After more than a dozen years under the name English and American Literatures (ENAM), the ENAM department will become the English Department, under the designation ENGL, beginning July 1, 2022. Department Chair Brett Millier announced the change to majors and minors on Friday, May 15, telling students that the change had been made and approved last fall because members of the department felt that the "English and American" name implied that courses in the department only teach national literature, which they do not.

In an interview with The Campus, Millier said that the department has been considering a change for the last three years. Many alternative names were proposed — "Literatures in English" was the most popular option — but faculty were warned that the new name would need to start with the word "English" to be easily searchable. At the departmental retreat last fall, according to Millier, someone proposed just "English" because it accomplished their goal of removing the "national literatures" implication of the current name. This proposal had wide support.

"We all feel that removing the implication that we teach only the national literatures of England and the United States is a good idea and more accurately reflects the Anglophone literatures from those countries — and also from the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Canada, Ireland and Australia/New Zealand — that we

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College announces new staff compensation plan to address widespread below-market rate wages

By JAKE GAUGHAN
Editor at Large

The college announced last month that it will implement a complete overhaul of its compensation structure, effective July 1. The decision is in part a response to an institution-wide wage study commissioned by the college that found Middlebury is currently paying 45% of its staff at rates below competitive market wages. The Mercer Study is a broad wage and salary survey across all departments commissioned by the college every few years and defines "competitive wages" as within 15% of the market median.

The college's undercompensation of staff members has been a large issue for years. In 2019, some staff members began the process of unionizing in response to a myriad of workplace issues at the college — with low wages being one of their primary concerns. In response to the emerging union campaign and large student protests advocating for increased staff wages, the college increased pay for some entry-level staff positions in January 2020.

During the early stages of the pandemic, Middlebury froze staff pay even as their workloads increased, further upsetting some of the college's lowest paid employees. Over the last year and a half, certain key staff departments remained drastically understaffed. In 2021, the college gave faculty and staff a 2% wage increase and one-time $1500 bonus. Still, housing costs in Addison County and Monterey increased and wages struggled to keep up. And in a September Staff Council survey, 46% of respondents said that they needed a second job to make ends meet.

Originally announced in March, the new compensation structure will tie Middlebury staff compensation to the wages at peer institutions. As the full implementation has not been finalized, human resources is releasing details of the plan slowly, with new information added every month. The college has set up an FAQ page to try to answer the litany of questions generated about the new compensation structure. While the new compensation approach is welcomed by many, some faculty and staff hold reservations about certain details of the project.

Mercer compared Middlebury to a comparison market of other colleges and universities such as Wesleyan, Lehigh and Smith, and found that only 46% of staff salaries were "competitive" in the defined market. Mercer developed this comparison market from schools that share similar operating expenses, student enrollment and geography with Middlebury. Compensation competitiveness was not distributed equally across positions: Over 60% of maintenance staff were making less than 15% of the market median while no one in human resources was making either less than or more than 15% of the market median.

In response to these findings, Vice President of Human Resources Catilin Goss is spearheading a new compensation model for all staff, focusing on immediately increasing wages for the least compensated staff members at the college.

"Just at a high level, the goal is really to pay everyone fair and competitive wages," Goss said in an interview with The Campus. "It's really important to us that

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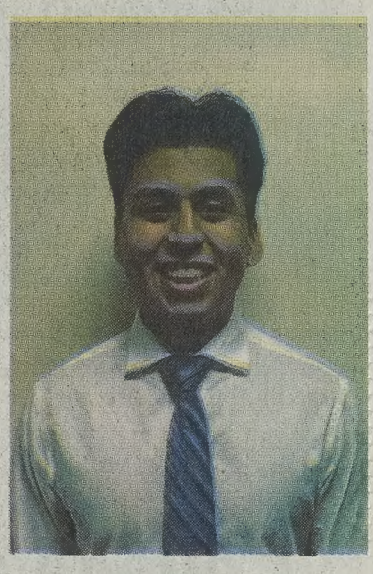
Riley Board/The Middlebury Campus

The Middlebury Human Resources Department is based in Marble Works. Vice President of Human Resources Catilin Goss is spearheading a new compensation model for all staff, based on the results of the Mercer study, an institution-wide wage and salary survey which showed that 45% of staff were earning below market rate wages.

Raymond Diaz '23 wins SGA presidential election in close race

By ABIGAIL CHANG
Managing Editor



Courtesy of Raymond Diaz

Raymond Diaz '23 has been elected as the next SGA president.

Raymond Diaz '23 won the Student Government Association (SGA) presidential election on Tuesday, April 19 with 435 votes — 56.1% of the 775 total ballots cast. His opponent, current Junior Senator Aubrianna Wilson '23, received 43.9% of the vote.

Diaz, who hails from the Bronx, is a sociology major and double minor in education studies and mathematics. Though he has not held a position on SGA before, Diaz highlighted his roles in JusTalks, ResLife and Distinguished Men of Color (DMC) throughout his campaign.

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COLLEGE BUYS LAND IN DOWNTOWN MIDDLEBURY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

By IDEAL DOWLING
Editor at Large

On Friday, April 8, Middlebury announced its purchase of a 35-acre parcel of land on Seminary Street Extension in downtown Middlebury for $1.5 million, a deal the Board of Trustees approved in February. The college plans to have Summit Properties of South Burlington, a development company owned by Middlebury graduates Charlie Brush '69 and John Giebink '77, create mainly affordable and subsidized workforce housing on the lot.

Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration David Provost cited the college's role in supporting the town's economy and the need to address hiring challenges as the main reasons behind the purchase. The lack of reasonably priced housing options in Addison County has been an obstacle to hiring for the college, Porter Medical Center and other local employers. The influx of new Vermont residents during the pandemic as people left urban areas only worsened the issue.

"We know [that] to attract and retain the best faculty and staff, they need to be able to access housing. That is becoming a problem across Vermont," Provost said. Currently, about 20% of the college's workforce commutes from New York, according to Provost.

Mira Veikley, assistant professor of theater, attested to the obstacles housing scarcities create for college employees. When she began working at Middlebury in 2015, she rented in Ripton and did not move to the town of Middlebury until 2018. Though she has had a positive experience with her rental in Middlebury, she noted that her single-income friends, in particular, have had more difficulty finding affordable places.

Veikley also said the lack of childcare options in Addison County can put young working parents in a difficult position when there are no housing options for extended family members to move nearby.

"Considering the whole circle of people who you want to build a foundation with as a faculty member, it would mean a lot if there was more housing. My mom could consider selling her house if she was able to get something here that would sustain her long term," she said.

The property the college purchased is zoned for high-density housing, and the development plans currently provide for the creation of approximately 100 units ranging from one to four bedrooms that will house 250 to 350 people in total. The mix of housing types will be determined at a later time, but apartments, multi-family houses and single-family homes are all in consideration.

The costs of and income requirements for affordable housing is determined by local law. In Addison County, households of two with a combined income under $50,000 qualify for affordable housing, while households of two with a combined income between $50,000 and $80,000 qualify for subsidized workforce housing. There will be some housing units available at market price for those with combined incomes over $80,000.

There will not be explicit restrictions on who can purchase the housing units such that they would be reserved for college employees, though Human Resources plans to advertise and make units accessible as they become available by organizing open houses for faculty and staff, according to Provost.

"If the development ends up housing around 300 people, we are confident that a big proportion will be taken by college and hospital employees," he said.

The college had considered using land it had acquired over the past 30 to 50 years to develop affordable housing, but the costs of setting up utilities would have been too high, according to Provost. The parcel on Seminary Street Extension was a better option because it is walking distance to the college and it already has utilities infrastructure in place.

When Summit Properties approached the college about partnering to purchase and develop the land, the deal made sense. The development company had previously tried unsuccessfully to buy the property, and partnering

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Middlebury Language Schools to introduce an English Language School

By RYAN McELROY
Contributing Writer

Middlebury announced the opening of its 13th language school, the English Language School (ELS), which will focus on the instruction of students learning English as a second language. The program, hosted at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) at Monterey, will begin with the summer 2022 session and run for the rest of the academic year in fall and spring sessions.

Under the guidance of Rogers Walker, director of the new ELS, the program will build on the history and experience of English instruction at Middlebury, incorporating it with the unique features of Middlebury Language Schools that promote full language immersion.

"I think my first priority [going forward] is to continue the level of quality that we've had in English language instruction, and to ensure that we continue providing an excellent, top quality language education experience for all the students that we welcome here," Walker said. He told The Campus that, prior to the ELS, MIIS has run several intensive English programs over the years. "We've had over 50 years of experience with English language education, we've run a variety of different programs, and this English language school will continue to build on that legacy."

The school will require students to take the language pledge — a promise to only communicate in the language being studied — to maximize reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. While Middlebury and MIIS have many common values and practices, Walker looks forward to finding other ways that the ELS can integrate other parts of Middlebury's language instruction into its program.

"I think [Middlebury] is well known in the field of language instruction for being excellent at teaching English. But we want to collaborate with the language schools to learn from what they do really well," Walker said.

Walker explained that the ELS will have several goals for its students. It will focus on a communicative approach for the program that will allow students to express themselves meaningfully in English about things that interest them. Walker also expressed his plan for creating an authentic learning experience with activities that incorporate the real world into their lessons and by remembering how language fosters human relationships.

"We want to bring the things that people would normally do in everyday life into the classroom and really break down the barriers between the classroom and the world outside," Walker said. "I think [English language learning] really is a way to bridge cultural divides and to make the world a better place through facilitating better communication and better understanding."

The new school accepts students operating at proficiency levels from intermediate to advanced, expecting that anyone enrolled has previously learned the English alphabet, simple vocabulary and other basic parts of the language. ELS will also invite professors from Middlebury and other institutions to be guest speakers this summer to encourage engagement in class. One major goal of the ELS, Walker said, will be to prepare students for their future, whether that is enrolling in higher education or joining the professional workforce.

In addition to the general program, ELS will also teach a six-week English Preparation for Graduate Studies program for students admitted to MIIS to prepare them to participate in the classroom and communicate with professors.

Beyond the intensive English instruction in the classroom, ESL students will participate in co-curricular activities like volleyball, cooking and movie nights. These activities help advance the students' vocabulary and build their cultural fluency. An annual activity for all MIIS students called "Beach Day" — where students take a trip to Monterey Bay and participate in beach activities — will soon include the ELS students as well. Walker said the students greatly enjoy these experiences and that they help build both English proficiency and a sense of community among students.

"Language learning is a highly social phenomenon. Technology and all those things are important in our day-to-day lives and in language instruction, but we can't forget the basic importance of human connection in language learning. That's why I got involved in language education," Walker said.

Looking to the future of the program, the English Language School will continue after this summer session into fall 2022 and spring 2023 sessions. The ELS is currently accepting applications for the summer and fall. The program accepts students of any age and from anywhere in the world, including domestic students. For the eight-week session, tuition is $3,900, and for the 16-week session, it is $6,500. The ELS Dates and Fees page estimates several additional expenses, including those for housing, food and health insurance.

"Diversity is definitely one of the key goals that I have for the language school and making sure that the school is able to welcome as many students as possible. Any student who wants to join, we want there to be a space for them," Walker said.

College announces new staff compensation plan to address its widespread below-market rate wages

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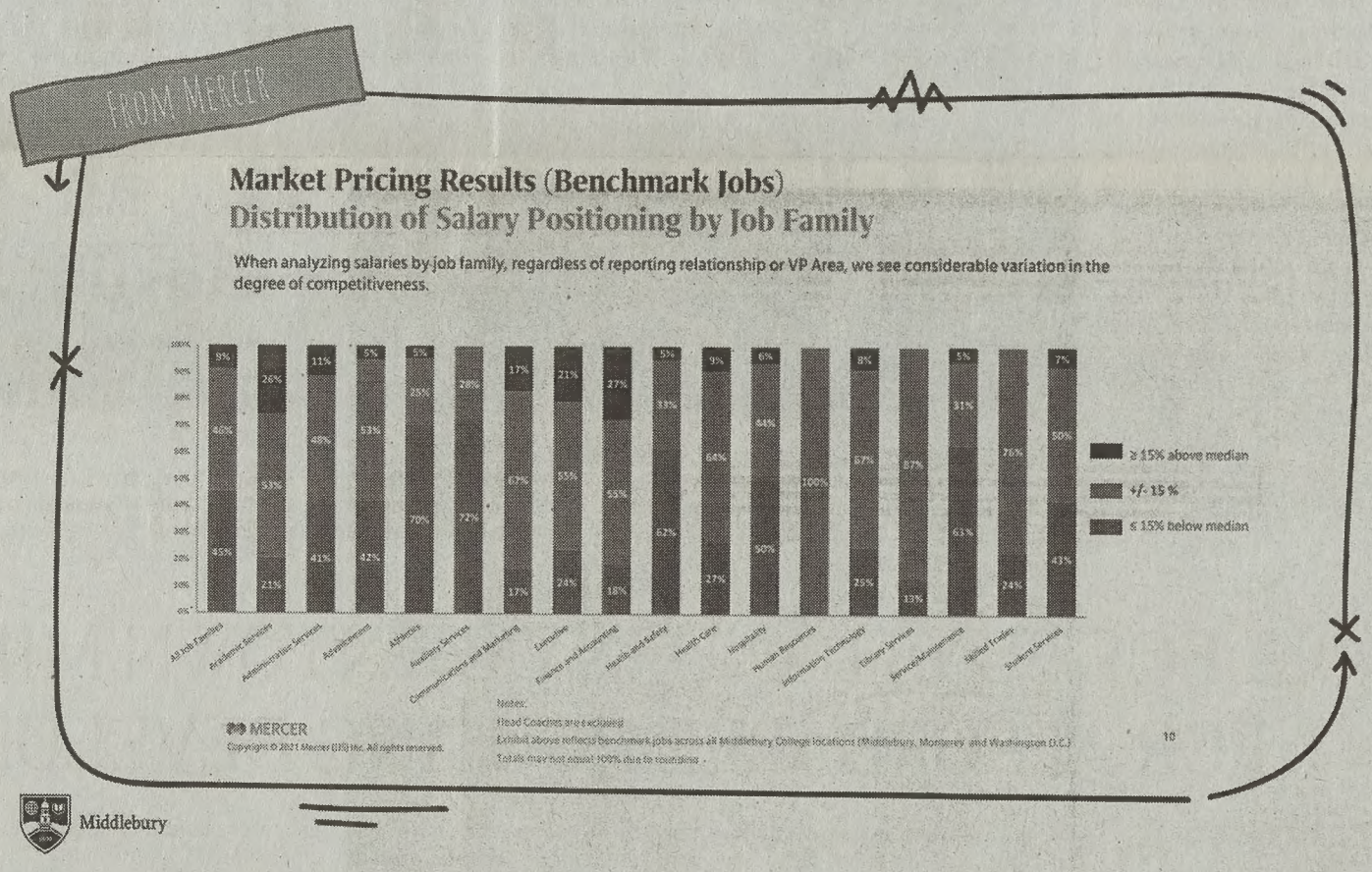

COURTESY PHOTO

we're increasing pay for our lowest-paid employees so they're fairly compensated, and we're bringing their salaries in line with the market. It's a top priority for Middlebury."

The new compensation initiative will be funded by three different sources of revenue, according to David Provost, college treasurer and executive vice president for finance and administration. The three revenue sources are the endowment, budget reallocations and tuition.

In an interview with The Campus, Provost stated that the recent 4.5% tuition increase for next year was motivated by inflation and "pressures on [staff] compensation." But the largest source of revenue for the increased compensation is the reallocation of money from other areas of the college's current operating budget to staff wages. The college's operating budget for FY 2022 was $283.4 million.

"We went to all of [Senior Leadership Group] SLG and we said, 'Okay, we currently spend $300 million. Could we spend it differently? Could we throw more at compensation?'" Provost said.

According to Provost, the members of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) were tasked with finding 4% of their operating budgets which could be reallocated to staff compensation. Provost explained that, "some found 1%, some found 4.5% [and] some found 0%." Provost clarified that some departments, such as Health Services, actually discovered a need for a larger budget through this process, and that departments that have already been subjected to budget cuts in the recent past, such at the library, will not be cut further.

Professor Mike Olinick, current president of the Middlebury chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), thinks that such budget reallocations might hurt the college.

"We went through an exercise a few years ago to see what Middlebury should give up doing to try to contain its costs," Olinick said in an interview with the Campus. "The end result was that they cut the size of the staff, but didn't cut the amount of work that needed to be done."

Yet Tim Parsons, college horticulturist and former president of Staff Council, differs from Olinick in his characterization of the previous audits, saying that he doesn't think that a meaningful reconsideration of budgets has been done before. "There's a lot of room to refocus our spending to be more student-centered," he said.

The challenge of budget reallocation will be compounded by the rising costs of goods globally. According to one Dining staff member, who spoke to The Campus on condition of anonymity due to fear of retribution from management, the Dining Services budget is projected to increase 13–18% in the next year due to supply chain issues and inflation.

Compounding the plan's uncertainty is the fact that the incoming Class of 2026 and their tuition hasn't been finalized yet, so the college doesn't know how much of that money could be available for increased compensation. Because Middlebury is need blind, they will not know the proportion of the incoming class that will pay full tuition and the proportion that will be given financial aid.

"Caitlin [Goss] is moving forward and simulating what it would look like if she had a pool of $5 million, $7 million, $10 million," Provost said. "As we hone in on this and get closer to the middle of May, we will choose that number and communicate that with everyone."

Though the new plan focuses on the lowest compensated at Middlebury, some are still apprehensive about just how much that will help.

"A lot of the time in situations like this, the top levels tend to make out a lot better than the bottom levels," the anonymous dining staff member said in an email to The Campus. "The reality is, who needs that compensation more? The ones that make $70,000 or the ones making $35,000 and are living paycheck to paycheck."

"Vermont is, in many ways, a very expensive place to live in comparison to some of the other cities where NESCAC colleges are," Olinick said in an interview with The Campus."I think there's been a myth that some of the trustees have bought into, that we don't need to pay workers in Vermont as much because it's cheaper to live here. It's certainly not true."

For the Vermont campus, the new model will not consider the local cost of living. However, compensation for positions in Monterey and Washington D.C. — Middlebury in D.C. is an administrative office which "provides a wealth of resources" for alumni, faculty and students — will be 15% higher than the compensation for their Vermont counterparts due to "geographical difference."

One facilities staff member, who spoke to The Campus on the condition of anonymity due to fear of retribution from their manager, questioned if the new plan was ambitious enough.

"How come we're just shooting for the bottom [of the market]?" the facilities staff member said in an interview with The Campus. "You'd think Middlebury would want to be a little bit above market and say, 'Look, here's what we're doing for our people.'"

Parsons remembers when the college was the employer of choice in the area and hopes Middlebury can reclaim that title.

"I started in 2006, and all of my friends were amazed I got a job here because it was so hard to come and work at Middlebury college," Parsons said.

The anonymous facilities staff member was also concerned about how well the market data the college used would reflect current inflationary realities in the economy.

Provost clarified that while he hoped the recent rise in inflation would only be an issue in the short term and long-term inflation should be included in the college's new model. He also mentioned that given the realities of data latency, the college's new market strategy will never be completely up-to-date.

On April 8, faculty overwhelmingly voted to approve a motion urging the administration to raise all employee wages 10% in response to rising inflation. An amendment to the motion which sought to prioritize raises for employees making less than $70,000 a year failed.

"We are acutely aware of the impact of inflation, especially on the lowest paid," Provost said. "That impact to someone being paid $40,000 is significantly more than someone getting paid $140,000."

At the individual level, the new compensation plan will completely change how employees are evaluated and thus, paid. While the market sets the compensation range for a given position, ultimately managers will decide position compensation.

The college will be getting rid of the Annual Performance Summary, or APS, the current structure of employee merit evaluations. Instead, under the new plan, managers will evaluate employees using a "skill matrix based on ownership and impact," according to an HR presentation given to staff in March.

Goss said she hopes that this new, regimented process will actually improve employee and management relationships around compensation. "Sometimes these are hard conversations. But I think clarity is really, really helpful. And this [process] is built with transparency and clarity at the center of it," she said.

But not everyone holds such optimism for the new program's effect on the workplace. After speaking with The Campus, the staff member in facilities requested anonymity in part because "the new wage structure is going to be, in a sense, how your manager thinks you're doing. You probably don't want to make them mad."

English and American Literatures Department to be renamed English Department

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actually teach," Millier said.

ENAM majors in the class of 2022, graduating this May, will have the ENAM notation on their transcripts. Going forward, the classes of 2023 and 2024 will be allowed to choose between ENAM and ENGL for their transcripts, although the default will be ENGL.

Millier clarified that the change is purely in name, and that there are no curricular changes, associated with the name change or otherwise, planned for next year.

The name English and American Literatures came into being in 2006 with the end of a now-extinct department. From 1928 to 2006, Middlebury had a department called American Literature and Civilization, which offered both American Literature and American Civilization majors. In 2003, faculty proposed merging the literature half of this department with the English Department that existed at the time.

"The name English and American Literatures was chosen to mollify the opponents to the merger — and at the time Harvard and Brandeis and several other schools called their departments 'English and American Literature,'" Millier said, adding that those schools have since changed the names of those departments. She said that Middlebury added the "-s" to the end of their name to "suggest the diversity of both traditions."

Another intention of this merger was the creation of the American Studies Department (AMST), the interdisciplinary and non-literature-based program that still exists today. Some faculty, such as Millier, joined the new ENAM department in the merger, while others including Professor Will Nash and Professor Michael Newbury, became jointly appointed to ENAM and American Studies.

Millier explained that the merger decision was very controversial, and caused strife among faculty in the American Literature and Civilization Department. She noted that two faculty members who strongly objected to the merger have since retired. With regard to the present name change, Millier explained that she has experienced no opposition from any faculty or students.

Professor of English and American Literatures Cates Baldridge concurred that ENAM faculty have recently begun to feel that the "English and American" name misrepresents the scope of the department's teaching, which actually encompasses literature from around the world that is written in English.

> "For what it's worth, this change brings us into conformity with the way departments like ours are described at other colleges and universities nationwide."

"For instance, this fall I'll be teaching a seminar on the great South African novelist J. M. Coetzee," Baldridge explained. "For what it's worth, this change brings us into conformity with the way departments like ours are described at other colleges and universities nationwide."

Assistant Professor of English & American Literatures Jennifer Wang said that the name change better reflects her work as a professor. "For me, I think the name change reflects how the department is striving and aspiring to be a more diverse and inclusive place," she said. "I do think the name reflects the courses I teach."

Mary Moore '22.5, a major in the department, said that she likes the change. "I think that the change to 'English' is a nice simplification from a degree title that was rather cumbersome," she said. "I agree that the switch from English and American Literatures does a better job indicating that [literature] from around the globe may be covered in courses."

Moore added that, while she supports the change, she wishes the English department was additionally discussing what she sees as larger concerns, such as decolonizing the curriculum, introducing anti-bias training and interweaving content or trigger warnings for class texts.

Millier added that it is logistically difficult to change the name of a department because of all of the URLs and website pages that need to be edited; she thanked the Registrar's office and the Dean of Curriculum's office for dealing with the number of places that the name must now be changed.

Riley Board/The Middlebury Campus

The hallway of the soon-to-be-renamed English and American Literatures Department in the Axinn Center for the Humanities.

Courtesy Photo

The location of the property purchased by the college, circled in red. Middlebury bought the 35-acre parcel of land for $1.5 million.

COLLEGE BUYS LAND IN DOWNTOWN MIDDLEBURY FOR AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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with the college helped the project receive approval from the community.

"We are happy to work with Summit because they know Addison County, and the college doesn't want to get into the development business and own homes," Provost said.

As Summit develops the property and begins to rent and sell homes, the company will gradually pay back the college the $1.5 million initial cost. The college will not be responsible for any of the estimated $40 million needed for the development.

In addition to the lot, there is a nine-bedroom house on the edge of the newly acquired property in need of renovation. College administrators plan to sell it and are working with potential buyers to explore various uses for the house.

Construction is set to begin within the next eight months and continue over the next five to six years, although Provost is hopeful the project will be complete sooner. "From a developer's standpoint, that is a reasonable timeframe given the volatility of the construction market. But I am hopeful to do it sooner than five to six years, because we need it sooner," he said.

Provost also mentioned that although the college has never previously purchased a large parcel of land in town, it has invested in infrastructure projects like the crosstown bridge to Route 7 and the Middlebury Town Hall.

"The purchase is reflective of our desire to be in and of the community and a steward of the community," he said. Along those lines, the next contribution President Laurie Patton hopes to give to the town is the creation of a regional childcare facility.

Editor's Note: Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 contributed reporting.

Raymond Diaz '23 wins SGA presidential election in close race

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"Although I am new to the SGA, I am no stranger to leadership and supporting every community I have ever had the privilege of joining," he wrote on his campaign website.

Diaz appointed Evelyn Magdaleno '24, a history and education studies double major, to serve as his vice president.

Among Diaz and Magdaleno's goals for next year are distributing a newsletter to students to better communicate what SGA is working on, pushing for a Credit/No Credit option to replace the current Pass/D/Fail choice, compensating leaders of student organizations, increasing awareness of campus resources and assessing the college's counseling options.

The polls were open for 24 hours — from 5 p.m. on April 18 to the same time the following day. Just 26.9% of the student body participated in the presidential election, with slightly higher turnout for the contested fall Junior Representative election at nearly 38% and lower turnout for the uncontested spring Junior Representative and Sophomore Representative elections, with roughly 20% of all eligible voters participating in each.

Voter turnout for the SGA presidential election has dropped steeply over the past few years, with this year's numbers marking an 11.7 percentage point decrease from the year before. In April 2021, 38.58% of students participated in the presidential election won by Roni Lezama '22. And in April 2020, 55.27% of students cast a ballot in the election between John Schurer '21, Arthur Martins '22.5 and Myles Maxie '22, with Schurer winning in a landslide. In the past six elections, turnout has only exceeded 60% one time: when the divestment referendum questions appeared on the ballot in 2018.

> "Although I am new to the SGA, I am no stranger to leadership and supporting every community I have ever had the privilege of joining."

In the other elections, Alexa Bryant '24 and Michael Eller '24 won seats as Junior Representatives for next fall against Max Nagle '24. Nagle ran unopposed for the spring Junior Representative seat, winning one of the two seats. Orlando Cácares '25 and Noah Vogel '25 ran unopposed for the two Sophomore Representative seats. With no candidates running for Senior Representative, that election will be conducted later, according to an email from the SGA Co-Directors of Operations.

The Campus plans to publish additional coverage of the presidential election in a future issue.

ENGINEERING DUAL-DEGREE PARTNERSHIPS EXPAND OPTIONS FOR MIDDLEBURY STUDENTS

By XIAOYUAN JIAO
Contributing Writer

With no major available at the college, Middlebury's aspiring engineers are often left waiting for a letter of admission for the dual-degree program from Dartmouth or Columbia. Middlebury partners with other colleges to offer specific career programs for STEM students at the college, and these two universities are the most popular choices among Middlebury students applying to dual-degree engineering programs.

According to Phillip Caplan, assistant professor of computer science and one of the current advisors of the program, students can either do a 3-2 program at Columbia, in which they finish their Middlebury degree in three years and go to Columbia for two, or a 2-1-1-1 program at Dartmouth, in which they complete two years at Middlebury, one at Dartmouth, return to Middlebury for their senior year, and then complete one more year at Dartmouth.

Professor of Physics Susan Watson, another advisor for the program, said the Dartmouth program has been students' top choice given its close relationship with the college, which makes navigating Middlebury requirements easier. The Columbia program is also gaining popularity because of its prestige and greater number of admissions slots.

In 2021, three students applied to Columbia and six students to Dartmouth, while this year, five students applied to Columbia and seven students to Dartmouth. Out of the approximately 10 or so students who apply to both Dartmouth and Columbia each year, the acceptance rate is typically 50–60%.

Although admission to each program is less competitive than the universities' general admission processes, it remains stressful for the students, as they are being compared to students from the best liberal arts colleges in the Northeast.

"An engineering degree requires the study of mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer science and more. An engineering skill set can be thought of as a toolbox, and every topic you study becomes a tool in your toolbox," Caplan said.

Prerequisites include courses in the Math, Physics, Computer Science and Chemistry departments. Columbia expects students to complete most of their major and interdisciplinary requirements before enrolling and requires students to complete other courses — such as an introductory economics course. Students applying to Columbia may have additional major-specific courses to take before admission to the program. For example, studying computer science at Columbia would also require courses in discrete mathematics and data structures, whereas a major in mechanical engineering would require courses in differential equations and linear algebra.

"The biggest tip for any student interested in the program is to just be intentional about course selection your first year. By your second year, you can decide if it is something you want to continue pursuing," Nestor Orozco-Llamas '23, a student in the program who studied at Dartmouth, said.

Students also struggle with Dartmouth's quarter system. According to Orozco-Llamas, out of around 20 dual degree students, only about eight follow a normal fall/winter/spring schedule. If students select other options, it is very likely they will get them. If they only put fall/winter/spring, it is more competitive.

Previously, admission to Columbia's program was guaranteed provided a certain GPA requirement was met and the necessary pre-engineering courses were completed. However, the university has since phased the policy out and will only offer guaranteed admission to those who matriculated at Middlebury in fall 2018 or earlier.

Given the demanding requirements, student Will Hoppin '23 said it's crucial to plan early. "I'd recommend being absolutely certain after your first semester of college, and getting excellent grades, particularly in STEM," Hoppin said. "Given that these two schools require students to go completely out of their way to take tons of pre-engineering classes, you should probably do well because getting rejected after spending years preparing for one school is not fun."

Students like Hoppin also confess the lack of systematic support for the application process. "I had to bushwack my way through: You don't know who to talk to, and it's quite hard to find people who have done the program before. It's like doing your own independent study because it's a path less trodden, and there are only a few kids in your year who care about doing this program," Hoppin said.

However, all said and done, the dual-degree engineering program is favored for a reason.

"Another part that I have really enjoyed is getting to know other dual-degree students from schools around the Northeast. It has been nice getting to learn about their college experiences and how they differ from the ones at Middlebury or Dartmouth," said Orozco-Llamas.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

BICYLE IN THE TREE BEHIND FOREST

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PHOTO BY WAYNE WANG '22.5

Pandemic isolation and social anxiety leads to increased participation in mentoring program for Addison County kids

By MAGGIE REYNOLDS
Local Editor

A club that pairs Middlebury students with kids at Addison County schools has seen an uptick in participation as a result of increased mental and social struggles among local elementary schoolers, likely caused by the pandemic.

Community Friends had a 33% increase in matches in this month's spring match cycle, according to Katie Cantrell '23, one of the club's lead student coordinators. Cantrell said she attributes this increase in kids participating in the program to widespread loneliness and social anxiety as local schools returned to in-person learning this past fall and then removed mask mandates in mid-March.

"[There is] a dramatic increase that we are seeing [in number of participants] as we are transitioning out of Covid-19 rules," Cantrell said.

The majority of new kids joining the club are in the kindergarten and first grade age range, meaning their first year of school was entirely masked and/or online, said Gwen Orme '23, the club's other lead student coordinator. Orme said she has also encountered older kids who are having behavioral issues or are struggling with respecting personal space after having been home for two years and not interacting with many peers their age.

Kids aged 6 to 12 at any Addison County elementary school are eligible to participate in the Community Friends mentoring program. The program currently has 75 active mentor-mentee pairings, though the number of matches has fluctuated substantially during the pandemic.

There is not one school that attracts a clear majority of kids to the program, Cantrell said. Rather, it is a mix of kids from Mary Hogan Elementary, Orwell Village School, Salisbury Elementary, Bristol Elementary, Cornwall Elementary, Ferrisburgh Central School, Vergennes Union Elementary, Middlebury Union Middle School and a couple of home-schooled kids.

Cantrell said about 70% of kids that participate in the program are referred by their school counselors or therapists. The remaining kids come to the group because their siblings have a mentor, their family friends have a mentor or one of their parents is a Middlebury professor.

Orme and Cantrell said they emphasize the opportunity for kids to make friends with peers who participate in the program through bigger group events that include many pairs of mentors and mentees.

"We know kids are struggling to make friends and socialize in school," Cantrell added.

Before the pandemic, mentors and their mentees were expected to meet for two hours each week in-person. Mentor-mentee pairings had access to any spots on campus; popular activities included eating in the dining halls together, visiting the athletic center, looking at books in the library and attending sporting events, Orme said.

The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 forced the club to switch to virtual mentoring, which created a number of challenges. Some mentors returned home to international locations, which made coordinating time zones difficult, while a number of mentees did not have computer or internet access, Orme said. The club implemented letter writing as an alternative form of communication, but it often proved difficult to keep students' attention, she added.

They also switched meeting expectations from two hours per week to between 30 minutes and an hour as kids struggled with Zoom fatigue from online school all day. Orme said about 30% of mentors lost contact with their mentees at some point during the pandemic.

When students returned to campus in fall 2020, the college's no-visitor policy forced all Community Friends to remain virtual. Meetings continued virtually through the fall 2021 semester, as many kids aged 6 to 12 could not receive the vaccine until early 2022.

Cantrell and Orme, along with the rest of the club's Coordinating Board, put on a series of Zoom events during this time of virtual meetings. These events included a "Boo Bash" with an online scavenger hunt and virtual pumpkin carving, a winter wonderland festival with asynchronous winter crafts and a weekly story hour. Orme said it was a challenge to get attendance at those events, though, and typically only about two mentor-mentee pairings attended.

The beginning of the spring 2022 semester marked a shift to in-person meetings outdoors and with masks required. On March 15, all Addison County school districts shifted to a mask optional policy, which allowed Community Friends to return to normal pre-Covid operations.

Along with the excitement of mentors and mentees meeting fully in-person for the first time in two years, Cantrell said, the club will be putting on a couple of events for all matches in the coming weeks.

On Sunday, April 24, there will be a field day event at Pepin Gymnasium, with activities such as jenga and bag races. Saturday, May 7, will be the end-of-year barbeque celebration, with a tie dye station using special Community Friends t-shirts and a snow cone machine, Cantrell said.

"It's a whole big fun celebration," she added.

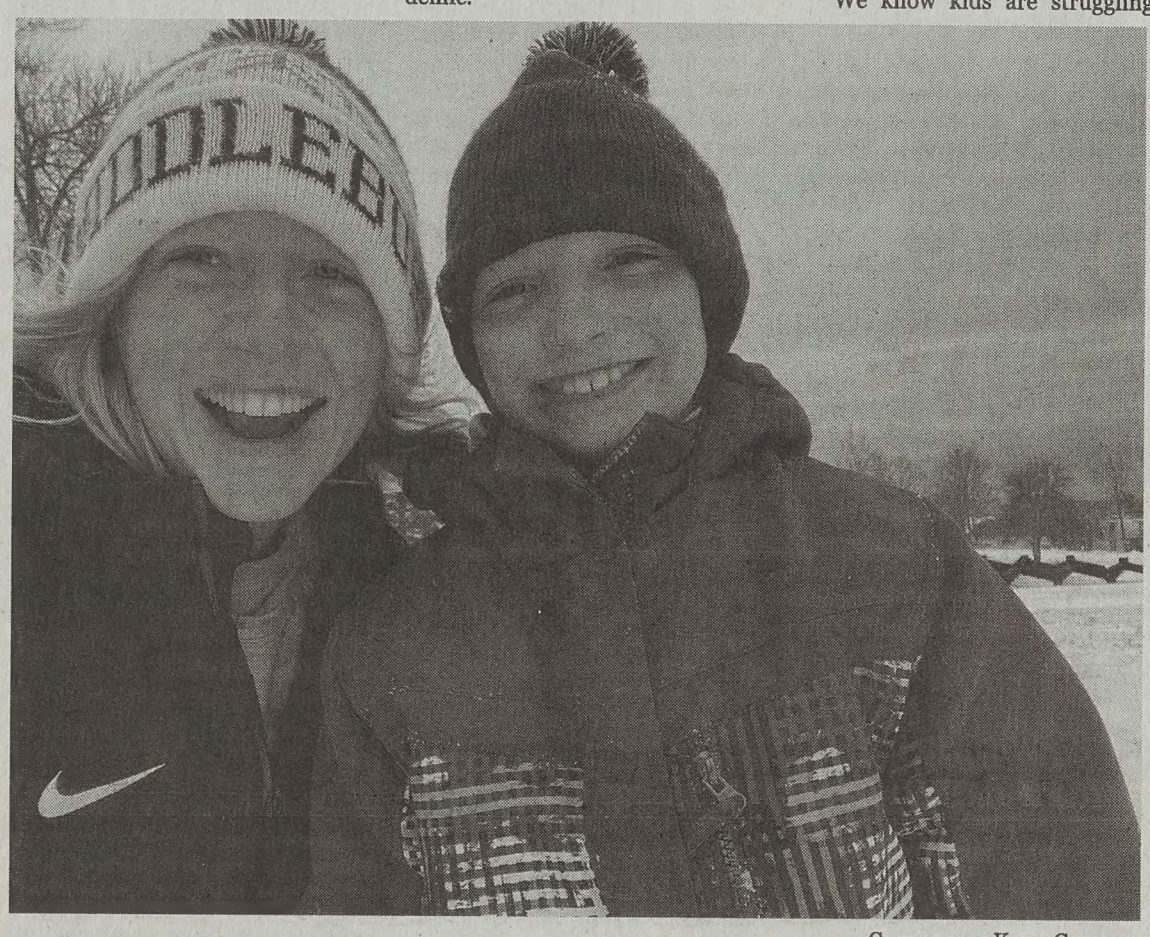
The club receives funding for events like the field day and the barbeque from a combination of college funding and donations from alumni or previous mentors, Orme said. The group has a couple of mentees whose parents were a part of the club themselves as children.

Both Cantrell and Orme have been involved with Community Friends since their first semester in fall 2019. Cantrell's mentee, Carson, was 7 when they were matched, and Orme's mentee, Shelby, was 6. The two stepped into the roles of co-lead student coordinators at the beginning of this semester, after serving two semesters on the club's 10-person Coordinating Board.

"Carson has taught me more than he'll ever be able to grasp at 10 years old. He really is my best friend," Cantrell said. "It really is a two-way mentorship. As much as I hope that I am helping him, I have learned just as much."

Orme added that it has been special to see Middlebury students give back to the Addison County community now that restrictions are opening up on campus. "I [am] so pleased with how the Middlebury Community [has] shown up for these kids."

Editor's Note: Maggie Reynolds is a mentor with the Community Friends Club.



Courtesy of Katie Cantrell

Katie Cantrell '23 with her Community Friends mentee Carson, 10, in February 2022.

Alumni-founded Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream now available at Middlebury

By EMILY HOGAN
Layout Editor

When Middlebury alumni Becky Castle '91 and her husband Bob Clark '89 came back to Vermont in 2011, they knew they wanted to start out working in agriculture. And, as ice cream fanatics, Clark and Castle knew they wanted to create their own unique ice cream business that would incorporate the berries grown on their farm. So in 2013, the couple began working towards their ice cream brand: Sisters of Anarchy.

The name "Sisters of Anarchy" was a fairly easy one to think of for Castle, as the couple had always called their three daughters by this name. "It sort of ties in with the whole women's empowerment piece because it's very in your face and a lot of the people that we feature and highlight are women that are really pushing the boundaries," Castle said. She mentions how she wants her daughters to understand this messaging as well by breaking boundaries and questioning things they think are not right.

The Vermont-based Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream boasts 22 different flavors of ice cream, and is now sold on Middlebury's campus at MiddXpress. Their flavors include their signature "Chocolate Anarchy" as well as the Dolly Parton-inspired "Nine to Five," the wine-flavored "Whiner" and "Beefy Blonde," which is described on their website as "dedicated to great athletic women of substance." This is a nod to the business's aim of women's empowerment. In addition to ice cream, Sisters of Anarchy also sells wellness syrups — both elderberry and aronia berry syrups.

Prior to the move back to Vermont, Clark had worked for 25 years in film and television, while Castle had long done fundraising for global health projects. But the couple wasn't new to the agriculture industry. Clark came from a dairy-farming family in upstate New York. In 2013, the couple bought a raw, untouched piece of property. "We spent two years doing soil-health restoration with cover-cropping, like all the preparatory work to put in our first plantings, and then we planted our first berries in 2015," Castle said.

Castle has experience running a business through consulting. "I run a consulting firm that does fundraising and partnership development for global health, and I've worked all over the world with that business," Castle said. She noted how, though she had previous entrepreneurial experience, she hadn't previously thought about working in agriculture.

Castle mentioned how her and Clark's individual skill sets complement each other, a necessary aspect of running a growing business in the agriculture sector.

"[Agriculture] requires such a wide range of skills — you have to understand the agronomy, you have to know a lot about your specific crops, you have to understand marketing and finding markets. It requires a real renaissance person," she said. Clark runs the overarching strategy of the business as well as the farming aspects, while Castle focuses on marketing and sales development.

Looking toward the future, the couple hopes to expand the business's retail locations across more of the country. Sisters of Anarchy currently sells their ice cream in 26 locations across New England, including at the Skinny Pancake at the University of Vermont and now MiddXpress. "That's probably going to double in the next 12 months. We're really focusing a lot more on that," Castle said.

Prior to the onset of Covid-19, the business got most of its revenue from scooping at events or at the farm.

"I think Covid made us realize that there's a real risk in having just that one revenue channel," Castle said.

As a result, they are looking to move the business more towards wholesale, as this would allow Sisters of Anarchy to earn much more revenue year round, rather than just during the peak scooping months of May to September. Castle predicts that their wholesale will double in the next year and then double once more in the following year.

She mentioned that the wholesale aspect of their business is dependent on being able to drop-ship to stores throughout the country, another area the couple is working toward improving. For regional orders to places like Vermont and Massachusetts, they use a Vermont not-for-profit delivery service called Food Connex and are planning to work with another not-for-profit food hub in Western Massachusetts called Food Connects. In order to be able to fully service retail locations anywhere, the couple is exploring drop-shipping, or continuously shipping in pints of ice cream to stores across the country to keep them routinely stocked. The business currently ships small deliveries of around 6 pints of ice cream to every state in the country, but drop-shipping could allow them to ship up to 40 pints, or 40 single serves. "Then we really could service retail locations anywhere," Castle said.

As Castle and Clark work toward building their wholesale, they share hopes that this will also bring more brand awareness. "It's a pretty expensive gift, but I think if we have good enough brand awareness then our online sales are really going to benefit from the wholesale," Castle said.

Through Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream, Castle noted how she can truly explore her passion for creating something from scratch. "Everything that we use on a daily basis and that we eat, it requires somebody to make it," she said. In her prior work, she said, her daily experience consisted of writing about doing things rather than actually doing those things.

"Now that I'm actually doing something and making a product, I think that there's a real value in people at liberal arts colleges thinking about making something — like not just doing something in technology or writing but actually making a product," she said.

Courtesy of Becky Castle

A display of Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream's single serve containers, on sale now at MiddXpress.

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"We Keep Us Safe" Reflections on Patrisse Cullors' visit

Notes from the Desk

Daleelah Saleh '23 *is the Senior Opinions Editor of The Campus.*

It goes without saying that "Black Lives Matter" has become a household term. The founders of the movement, however — Patrisse Cullors among them — are much less widely known. When I received a promotional email from the Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB) that Cullors would be giving a talk on April 15, it felt like a huge deal to me. However, I quickly realized that this wasn't necessarily a shared sentiment: when I asked around, people either didn't know the event was happening or didn't know who Cullors was. I was still surprised, however, when I walked into a mostly empty Wilson Hall last Friday night.

To give people the benefit of the doubt, it's possible that they just missed the emails from MCAB about the event or had other things to do on a Friday evening. But I wonder if the lack of attendance from our community also reflects a shifting sentiment on campus, especially as we near the two-year anniversary of the "Black Lives Matter summer," a movement sparked by the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. If this talk had occurred in fall of 2020, I would be willing to bet that the attendance would've been much higher – maybe because BLM was "cooler" then, or maybe just because it was on the forefront of everyone's minds (and Instagram feeds).

During the talk, Cullors herself noted how useful social media has been in raising awareness about certain issues and mobilizing people towards action. Social media organizing is what led to "20 million people around the world standing up for Black lives in 2020," according to Cullors, despite the fact that we were at the height of the pandemic. Simultaneously, she emphasized the necessity of "getting off our screens and showing up for each other" in real life as well.

The talk happened at the end of a week during which a shooting occurred on a subway in NYC. During the same week, here at Middlebury, the Muslim Student Association (MSA) room in Forest basement was desecrated. As a New Yorker and Muslim, I witnessed a lot of people reposting info about both events in my social media feeds.

When faced with atrocious acts of violence on a national level, in combination with acts of violence on our very own campus, it can feel overwhelming to know how to react. Posting on social media is an easy way to show where you stand on an issue, indicate that you're tuned into current events and spread awareness. There's nothing inherently wrong with doing this — the issue is when it's your primary or only way of engaging with issues (something that I'll admit to having been guilty of in the past).

> Who keeps us safe? Who inherently feels the privilege of safety? Whose lives do we rally around when they're threatened?

Because posting on social media can only achieve so much.

While I'm grateful for the amount of MiddKids who have posted about the MSA incident and expressed disgust or frustration with the event and the administration's handling of it, there came a point where I dreaded seeing posts about it. The posts on my feed became a hollow reminder of the incident and the feelings of trauma, discomfort and lack of safety it brought up for me rather than a show of support. I would much rather have had people text and check on me (which a few of my friends did!), or in the spirit of Ramadan, donate to organizations dedicated to uplifting and supporting Muslims — a group of people who continue to face daily acts of violence and Islamophobia both on a national and international scale.

I've spent a lot of time over the past few weeks thinking about the question of safety, even before attending Cullors' talk. Who keeps us safe? Who inherently feels the privilege of safety? Whose lives do we rally around when they're threatened?

Both the MSA incident and the subway shooting might seem to indicate a need for increased "security" by way of surveillance. But if anything, the opposite is the case. I wouldn't feel any safer or more comfortable if Public Safety officers were to patrol the halls of Forest to ensure the prevention of similar incidents in the future. Nor do I feel safer when encountering police officers on my subway rides at home. In fact, many people were quick to point out that the NYC subway system is already overpoliced, a situation which clearly did nothing to prevent last week's shooting.

Who keeps us safe? We do. At least, that's the sentiment behind abolition work, which Patrisse Cullors' talk brought back to the forefront of my mind. Instead of relying on top-down structures of security, where we look outwards to Public Safety officers, police officers, etc to keep us safe, an abolitionist mindset encourages us to look out for each other and "create a new system that's steeped in an economy of care, deeply connected to the role that all beings play," as Cullors said.

Of course, this concept is a lot easier to support in the abstract when it doesn't apply to you personally.

In response to the MSA incident, I've seen people call for a range of actions from the administration, including expulsion of the person responsible. As a Muslim on this campus who felt personally victimized by this attack, my inherent impulse is to agree with this punitive mindset. I'm tired of Muslims being over-surveilled and disproportionately punished. Moreover, I'm fed up with those who commit acts of violence against Muslims receiving little to no repercussions. As someone who identifies as an abolitionist, however, I know that a punitive response is only a "bandaid" solution and doesn't actually do anything to address the harm and trauma other Muslim students are feeling. Nor does it do anything to counter Islamophobic sentiments on campus. However, a restorative justice circle (or something along those lines) doesn't feel like something I'd want to engage in with the perpetrator of the incident, even though that's what an abolitionist framework would entail.

> Abolition isn't just about tearing down the systems currently in place — it's about envisioning entirely new ways of being, both physically and mentally, such as actively making the choice not to police ourselves or each other.

Which is to say: abolition is messy, and difficult and nuanced. It's a framework that I'm still working through and learning about, and the process can be really exhausting and overwhelming at times. Associate Professor of Dance and Director of the Anti-Racist Task Force Christal Brown, who moderated Cullors' talk, addressed this in one of her questions: "How do we maintain the stamina to continue to fight and question our own dependence on this system that's not working?"

It's a question that I certainly don't have the answer to. But I'd like to think that leaning into community, joy, and connection, all of which Cullors highlighted in her response, is a good place to start. I was also struck by Cullors' point that grappling with systemic oppression has been both deeply distressing and deeply liberating. That feels like an important mindset to try to emulate: While there is so much (un)learning to do, it's also deeply freeing to extricate yourself from narratives that have historically served those with privilege and power. Because abolition isn't just about tearing down the systems currently in place — it's about envisioning entirely new ways of being, both physically and mentally, such as actively making the choice not to police ourselves or each other (which is, again, easier said than done).

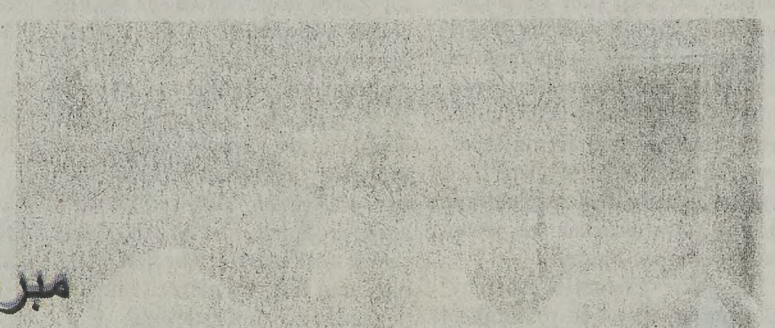
Cullors closed out the talk by sharing advice for future community organizers or anyone looking to create positive change. She emphasized the necessity of collaboration, stating: "Don't try to do this work alone. It's not a solo event, it's not a hero show. We do this as a collective, together." For those not sure of where to start, she encouraged them to join something.

"And if it doesn't exist, start it," she said.

Arabic Reflections with Maryait: "Mabrouk"

Column

Maryait Khader is the Teaching Assistant in Arabic.



مبروك

أو ألف مبروك أو حتى مليون مبروك

من العبارات التي نستخدمها بشكّل متكرر في العالم العربي، في المناسبات السعيدة الصغيرة والبسيطة منها والكبيرة، لنهنئ الأصدقاء والأحبة بالزواج مثلاً، أو لحصولهم على القبول من الجامعة أو التخرّج منها، بولادة طفل جديد، بالحصول على وظيفة، أو بشراء هاتف جديد، هذه العبارة التي نشتق منها عبارات أخرى "بارك الله فيك"، التي أيضاً قد تكون اسم لشخص للرجال: (مبروك) ، أو النساء: (مبروكة). وفي رمضان الشهر المقدّس لدى المسلمين، الذي نحن فيه هذه الأيام أكثر العبارات انتشاراً للمعايدة على الناس هي: "رمضان مبارك"

...or Mabrouk a thousand times. Or even a million times. In English the word is translated to congratulations. It is one of the expressions that we use frequently in the Arab world. We can say it to congratulate friends and loved ones on happy occasions, whether small or big. For example, marriage, college acceptances, graduating from university, welcoming a new baby, getting a new job or even buying a new phone. We derived the expression from "Allah Ybarik feek," which in English means, may God bless you. Mabrouk may also be a person's name for men: (Mabrouk) or for women: (Mabroukah). Lastly, in Ramadan (the holy month where Muslims fast) which we are currently observing, the most common way to wish someone a happy Ramadan is by saying "Ramadan Mubarak."

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Cliff-Hanger: "Torn"

By MAGGIE BRYAN
Contributing Writer

This is the first installment of "Cliff-Hanger," a new column by Maggie Bryan. Each week she will discuss the reality behind outdoor adventure films.

During the '90s, Alex Lowe was considered the ultimate American hero. Idolized for his first ascents and enthusiasm for mountaineering, he pioneered a generation of celebrity climbers, like Alex Honnold, Tommy Caldwell and Lynn Hill. In 1999, Alex was killed in an avalanche on Mt. Shishapangma in Tibet, an accident survived only by his climbing partner and lifelong friend, Conrad Anker. His story is one of tragedy, adventure and even a Shakespearean love triangle — all the makings of a great Hollywood film. The 2021 documentary, "Torn," rejects the potential for theatrics, instead embracing a personal approach to outdoor adventure cinema. Directed by Alex's son, Max Lowe, the film is more than a summary of Alex's life; it's an ode to the impacts he had, not just on the climbing world, but on his family. It's a family narrative of the five stages of grief, in the wake of an incomprehensible death. Most of all, "Torn" is the living diary of Max, one that reflects on decades of his story, and yet is still being written.

One of Max's greatest directing achievements is his ability to process deeply personal events as they occur, while simultaneously welding them into a piece for the public. He does this by establishing early tension around his father's death. When he begins interviewing his brothers, each of them is visibly uncomfortable. As a result, the audience is made aware that the family is still undergoing the journey of grief. By weaving together climbing footage, home videos and interviews, the film becomes a time capsule that is still being formed. One of the most potent examples of this occurs when Max's family goes to Alex Lowe Peak in Bozeman, Montana, to spread Alex's bones 16 years after his death. As Jennifer shakes the bones out of an aluminum water bottle, the camera pans to each family member's face and outstretched hands, interrupted by flashes of home videos. The videos contain morsels of nostalgia: the sons as toddlers skiing, Alex playing a child-sized violin, and close-ups of Alex's smile. The scene is one of few where the entire family is seen together, and with clips of Alex interwoven, it's like he's there with them. This unity of the past, the present and the family is a powerful way to culminate the film with a sense of calm.

Despite Alex's lingering presence, the topic of his death is largely avoided throughout the film. Most of the film's interviews are with Alex's widow, Jennifer Lowe-Anker, climbing partner, Conrad Anker, and sons, Sam and Isaac Lowe-Anker. During each interview, the audience feels almost as if they're invading an intimate family conversation. Interviewees address the camera as, "you" and "Max," and once or twice, the film cuts to Max's reactions behind the camera — especially when talking to his mother. After the avalanche, Alex's climbing partner Conrad bonded intensely with Alex's family. In fact, their bond was so strong that the following year, Jennifer and Conrad got married, and Anker adopted the three Lowe boys. The public has always been suspicious of their relationship, as has Max. He was the only son to keep the last name "Lowe," and as the oldest son, is the only one to have any memory of his father. It's clear from the film that Max has never gotten over his mother's ability to find love again so quickly, and the audience hears that tension when in one instance he repeatedly asks her, "Why?"

Conrad's first appearance in the film is more climactic than other interviewees. After a climbing video and quote from Alex is shown, the camera switches to an empty chair. Initially, it appears as if the empty chair represents Alex's absence. Then suddenly, Conrad walks in, takes a seat and sits for a moment meditatively, suggesting the transition in father figures for the Lowe family. One of the final scenes of the film isn't an interview or a home video, but a conversation between Max and Conrad shot in the Lowe-Ankers' kitchen. Max thanks Conrad for all he's done for his family, and wants to let him know how much he loves him. It is a tender moment, and having the film culminate in this moment draws attention to Conrad. When considered in conjunction with Conrad's first interview appearance, the film's theme is shifted from one of general family resilience to an ode to Conrad for being their hero. Conrad is seen as a sympathetic character throughout the film, yet the focus on him seems to disregard the roles others played in persevering after Alex's death. Audiences that are already put-off by his relationship with Jennifer may feel more disconcerted by this emphasis, yet simultaneously, a concentration on Conrad gives the opportunity for the audience to sympathize with the remarkable impact he's had on the Lowe family.

Despite delving deep into issues of family, "Torn" brushes over the ever-pertinent theme of climate change. To an extent, all outdoor films are a version of the same fable: Our lives are dictated by the earth and its systems, which will ultimately decide our fate. Alex Lowe's life was no different. He was killed in a weather event and brought back to his family 16 years later because of a snow melt caused by climate change. His story could have been a powerful window into humanity's relation to climate in the time since his death. Max Lowe's choice to not expand on the climate component was probably an effort to keep the personal feeling of the film. In an age where the environment must be part of every conversation, this choice feels neglectful. As climate change plays an increasingly dominant role in our lives, the film world must meet that shift by incorporating climate change into cinema wherever possible.

Pia Contreras Balbuena

Outdoor adventure films are often quick to skip over the family life of their subjects, unless they offer a compelling story. By incorporating personal narrative into adventure documentaries, personal struggles are more normalized. There is a lot of room to expand on the stories of families of famous alpinists, and as the outdoor film industry becomes increasingly progressive, it should continue to connect adventure to larger themes of mental health, familial struggles and the environment. The interdisciplinary nature of "Torn" is not only impressive, but important for our time.

"Botticelli in the Fire" wows audiences in completely sold-out run

By SOPHIE BUTLER-RAHMAN
Contributing Writer

"Botticelli in the Fire," written by Jordan Tannahill, was performed in the Hepburn Zoo blackbox theater last weekend. The show was the senior thesis in directing for Ryan Kirby '22 as well as the acting thesis for Madison Middleton '22.5 and an intermediate project in costuming for Katie Concannon '22. For this one weekend, the Hepburn Zoo blackbox theater was completely transformed, decked out with an ornate painted floor and draped columns. Colorful lights flashed as the audience settled into the house, creating a spectacle even before the play officially began.

The show begins with Sandro Botticelli (Middleton) interrupting Kirby's pre-show speech to start telling the story of his life, centered around the painting of the wildly famous "Birth of Venus." It introduces the well-known historical figures and artists Leonardo da Vinci (Ethan Fleming '24), Lorenzo de' Medici (Beck Barsanti '23.5), Clarice Orsini (Peyton Mader '24), Girolamo Savonarola (Francis Price '22), along with the characters of Poggio di Chullu (Jacob Raymond '23), Botticelli's best friend, and Madre Maria (Catie Clark '22.5), Botticelli's mother.

Botticelli, painter of the Sistine Chapel (although, as he confesses to audiences, just some wall frescoes, not the ceiling), has been tapped by the Medicis to paint Lorenzo's wife, Clarice. Botticelli himself is quite the talent and casanova and is revealed at the beginning of the show to be sleeping with his apprentice da Vinci, affectionately referred to as "Leo" throughout the play. As Botticelli begins working with Clarice on her portrait, she poses nude, which sparks an affair between the two of them. They continue with their affair until Medici discoveres the infidelity through the intimate manner in which Botticelli portrays Clarice in the painting. This causes chaos to ensue for all the characters, and Botticelli's apprentice and true love, da Vinci, ends up being held captive by the Medici family. The only possible way for Botticelli to free da Vinci is by renouncing art and burning all of his works, which he ultimately does for love. The show so beautifully grapples with love, sex, queerness and the role that art can take in ones life.

The intimate venue of the Hepburn Zoo allowed for audience members to be up close and personal with the characters. The show had an immersive atmosphere, with much of it built around audience interaction as characters frequently broke the fourth wall. The show itself combined the past and present day through costumes that date from the Renaissance, along with heavy '80s references including a Madonna soundtrack.

The impact that art has on the lives of all these actors is extremely present throughout the show, as a love of creating makes up the heart of the show. Theatre major and audience member August Siegel '25 spoke about their reaction to "Botticelli in the Fire" and its impacts for theater at Middlebury in the future.

"I have no doubt that I'm not the only one who felt deeply affected by the love story they told, and I'm sure that it meant a lot for queer students to see this type of representation in such a thoughtful way," Siegel said.

Representation in theatre is an important mechanism for paving the way for underrepresented artists to share their stories. "Botticelli in the Fire" cemented its legacy as a show to be talked about for years to come, with its unique approach to theatre and adeptness in broaching its subject matter. With a move toward a more post-pandemic time, people are eager to be entertained and experience the magic of live theater. Middleton and Kirby's time at Middlebury has inspired other students to challenge themselves with topics very intimate to their own lives.

"'Botticelli in the Fire' was undoubtedly my best creation. It was an unapologetic celebration of queerness without making the political statement of 'coming out.' It took the gay for granted and ran with it from the start," Kirby said. "I come from a conservative community in Texas, and I felt such intense catharsis having the chance to show the world who I am through my art in such a public way. I am grateful to have such a professional team that helped breathe life into this wonderful show. It truly felt like a thesis — challenging, but ultimately a true extension of me."

It was an absolute pleasure and joy to be in the audience of this fully sold-out show — which in itself is quite an achievement for a student production. Middleton and Kirby were able to seamlessly contrast moments of high tension and intense emotion with those of comedy and queer joy.

"When I was looking for my thesis, I wanted to find a script that would stretch me in multiple directions. I wanted to find a character who aligned in some way with my non-binary gender identity and who had a complete arc with a huge emotional range. I also wanted to find a show that would invigorate me as a sound designer and composer. 'Botticelli in the Fire' was clearly that show," Middleton said. "Working on this piece has been one of the greatest loves of my life. It has changed me. As an artist. As a person. As a community member."

The amount of talent in the company of "Botticelli" was astounding. Each member of the cast and crew poured their blood, sweat and tears into the project, and it was evident in each performance.

Courtesy of Julia McClain

Ethan Fleming '24 as Leonardo da Vinci (left) and Madison Middleton '22.5 as Sandro Botticelli (right).

The show combined the past and present day through Renaissance-style costumes, along with heavy '80s references including a Madonna soundtrack.

Moth-Up storytellers tackle their "flukes"

By SOPHIA AFSAR-KESHMIRI
Contributing Writer

Fifteen minutes before the Middlebury Moth-Up, a cacophony of sound filled The Gamut room as participants practiced in the back of the space while others casually talked. With voices coming from all directions, speakers practiced their stories one last time before the audience filled the small space. The room was filled with an air of palpable excitement, spunk and creativity. Four student storytellers, Nicky Coupe '25, Seth Brown '24, Luke Stovak '23 and Zoe Greenwald '24 filled the room with laughter as they told stories related to this event's theme, "Fluke."

Moth-Up is a one-of-a-kind experience; the atmosphere is casual, audience members get a chance to participate and, despite having a theme, the content is unpredictable. For the entire night, the best kind of chaotic energy filled the space, and this reflected the night's theme. With audience members sprawled-out over the entire space and the sound of laughter echoing all around, the room buzzed with energy. Stories ranged from heartwarming to outrageous and were all beautifully told.

As explained by Moth-Up Co-President Elissa Asch '22.5, Moth-Up is a student organization at the college that was inspired by the storytelling podcast "The Moth." At the start of the event, Asch informed the audience of the three rules participants had to follow when crafting their stories: Stories must be true, told without notes and run no longer than 10 minutes. It appeared that all storytellers handled the constraints effortlessly. Stories did not sound over-rehearsed, and the rules ultimately allowed the storytellers to be engaged with the audience in a way not possible with a script.

Though the performers were cool, calm and collected the night of the event, preparation is quick and difficult. Asch went on to describe the many steps that led up to the finished show. Moth-Up first searches for participants, then producers help storytellers craft their stories — all in a mere two-and-a-half weeks. In this span of time, producers meet with the speakers, help them develop their stories and rehearse. According to Ache, participants may apply to speak with or without a story in mind; this means that the development stage of the process can be anything from helping a participant turn their existing idea into a story to brainstorming stories from scratch. This is no easy feat considering producers and participants are often complete strangers before their first planning session. The success of the event is a testament to the producers' storytelling abilities.

Greenwald and Stovac told touching stories that left audience members with warmed hearts. Greenwald's story was a compilation of childhood trips to the eye doctor and the trials and tribulations that she encountered dealing with astigmatism. She painted a vivid image for the audience of her childhood self, reluctantly attending eye appointments and hating every minute of them. Listeners could picture her elementary-school-self sitting in a waiting room, reading her book that she so dearly loved. Keeping the audience engaged with her jokes, anecdotes and imagery, Greenwald finished the performance with the optimistic declaration that her difficulties have since subsided. Greenwald also mentioned how she handled the no script rule and prepared for the event by repeatedly telling her story. "The hard part for me was that [the story] wasn't scripted, and it wasn't memorized," Greenwald said. "Every time you perform it, it's different, which is terrifying."

Stovac told the story of his search for a strong sense of community and how the twists and turns in this journey landed him at Middlebury. Listening to Stovac was like going on a long road trip. He told his story as if it were a map, taking the audience through each seemingly random coincidence that landed him at the college. He connected how a move to Reno, Nevada, spikeball with friends and his summer job as a camp counselor ultimately got him to the college.

During Coupe and Brown's stories, the audience could not stop laughing. Both cracked jokes throughout their ten minute performances, leaving the lingering sound of laughter in the space for the entirety of their sets. Coupe's story was about her love for her Prius. She riddled her story with funny anecdotes about her driving test, adventures with her Prius and other car mishaps. She said that she did not practice the speech repeatedly but is comfortable improvising and appeared very natural on stage.

Similarly, the audience chuckled throughout Brown's tale about love on a Pennsylvania lake. Working as a boat captain, he described the ups and downs of managing a rowdy bachelorette party and a family's outing gone horribly wrong. As well as cracking jokes, his story had a strong sense of setting. Most of it took place on the lake he spoke of, and he transformed The Gamut room into this setting as he described supporting characters like a "Budweiser Dale" and places such as "Party Cove."

The theme and the stories themselves contributed to the atmosphere of the space, allowing the fun, chaotic feeling that a fluke can evoke grow over the course of the night. When the event ended, audience members took that energy out the door with them, having spent the night making friends out of four strangers.

If you'd like to become a Moth-Up storyteller, submit your pitch at go/mothstory.

Passing the torch: Current first years welcome newly admitted students

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

As the snow melts and current Middlebury students gather on the quad to enjoy the Vermont spring sunshine, high school seniors around the world are receiving their college acceptance emails. This year was one of Middlebury's most competitive admissions processes yet, and students have until May 6 to make a final decision. As the end of the semester approaches, the class of 2025 is wrapping up their first year of college and offers their reflections and wisdom for the classes of 2026(.5).

Addie Morrison '25 said that she wasn't quite sure what to expect from her first year of college. When thinking of what a MiddKid is, many different labels came to mind, but Morrison said her image of an outdoorsy and spontaneous student body has held true.

"I definitely expected people to be super outdoorsy, and I know a lot of people take the initiative and say 'I'm going here, do you want to come?' or "I'm going to be doing this,'" Morrison said.

However, Nikky Sztachelski '25 has had a different experience. Before coming to Middlebury, she connected with a family friend who assured her that there would be students with a wide variety of interests.

"I kind of wasn't expecting as many people to be outdoorsy," Sztachelski said. "I'm not an outdoorsy person per se, and I remember talking to her [family friend] and she said she wasn't the same way but there's also a bunch of people who don't [participate in outdoor activities]."

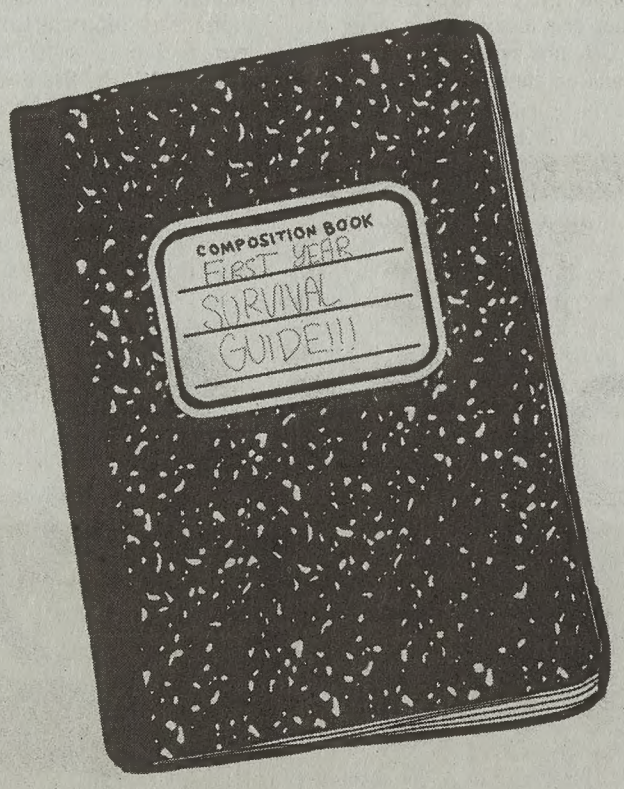
Elsa Mowers '25 also has appreciated meeting a variety of students, and said that it has helped her perspective grow.

"Coming to Middlebury, I expected this type of college in rural Vermont to attract similar people," Mowers said. "But, I have met people that hold vastly different beliefs and interests."

Mowers also said that everyone seems to have a passion that gets them genuinely excited. "This unique passion that each student holds drives them to want to succeed here, in whichever way they define success."

Although she had some trouble registering for classes in the fall, Morrison said that she ultimately embraced taking a variety of unexpected classes. "Take classes that maybe you're not expecting to like because some of the classes I've taken have been completely random, and I've really liked them," she said.

Sztachelski and Morrison both noted that they found a sense of community through sports teams but have also enjoyed exploring other community events through flyers and social media. Sztachelski also added that she was surprised by how small the campus community is, which she said was both a pro and a con.



SABRINA TEMPLETON

"You have your interactions with people, and you see them the next day and everywhere else from that point forward," Sztachelski said. "I knew it was a small school but not that small."

Morrison also added that the size meant that she would see friendly faces all around campus. "I feel like if you say hi to someone one time, they're going to recognize you and say hi again."

Anna Krouse '25.5 has only been on campus for a couple months, but has loved being a Feb.

"I feel like jumping in halfway through the year had much less of an impact than I thought it would. I also feel like people here naturally are just very friendly and I feel like I've been able to meet so many great people in just the two months I've been here," Krouse said.

She also suggested the prospective Febs embrace their semester off as an opportunity to explore something new. "It definitely can be daunting not going to school right away, but you can really turn your Febmester into anything you want!"

Sztachelski cautioned incoming students to prepare themselves for high levels of walking, and to bring a bike or scooter if possible.

Overall, Morrison said that she has found the student body to be very friendly and approachable.

"It seems scary to talk to people, especially if you're more introverted. It can be hard to approach people, but I think most of the time you'll find that people are super nice and willing to help you out," Morrison said.

Mowers suggests that prospective students take time to reflect on what they want to get out of their college experience and consider the characteristics of different institutions.

"For me, the vibrant but smaller student community, academic rigor and outdoor access initially attracted me to apply to Middlebury," Mowers said. "Also, many people are willing to answer questions, so ask away."

Radio Roundup: The Indie Rock takeover

PIA CONTRERAS BALBUENA

By WRMC EXEC BOARD AND DJs

Have your Spotify playlists become stale? Is your weekly mix just not cutting it? Maybe it's time to branch out and listen to something new. The Executive Board of WRMC, Middlebury College's radio station, has selected a wonderfully wide range of albums, spanning time and genre, for your listening pleasure. Check back each week for a new set of recommendations.

*RIYL (recommended if you like)

DJ Pick — Ben Knudsen '23

Show: Whatever It Is — Fridays at 11 a.m.

Album: "From 2 to 3" — Peach Pit

Genre: Indie Rock, Folk Rock

RIYL: Hippo Campus, Fleet Foxes, Summer Salt

Blurb: The Vancouver quartet's third studio album strips down the busier sound of their first two records and brings them in touch with some folkier roots. Neil Smith, Peach Pit's lead singer and songwriter, does some of his most poignant work to date on tracks like "Look Out!" and "2015," while precise lead guitar from Chris Vanderkooy is put to great use across the album. Perfect for driving through Vermont this spring with the windows down.

DJ Pick — Maeve Callahan '22.5 and Courtney Crawford '22.5

Show: Go Feb Yourself — Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

Album: "Five Seconds Flat" — Lizzy McAlpien

Genre: Alternative, Indie, Folk

RIYL: Adam Melchor, Eloise, Madeline the Person, Abby Cates

Blurb: Warm, pure and simple meets powerful and haunting in this recently released album. Lizzy McAlpine puts so much passion into her lyrics, and it's clear that all of her songs are incredibly heartfelt. She is just 22 years old, and yet her songs convey a timeless and intimate understanding of life, love and loss.

DJ Pick — Charlie Keohane '24

Show: Witching Hour — Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

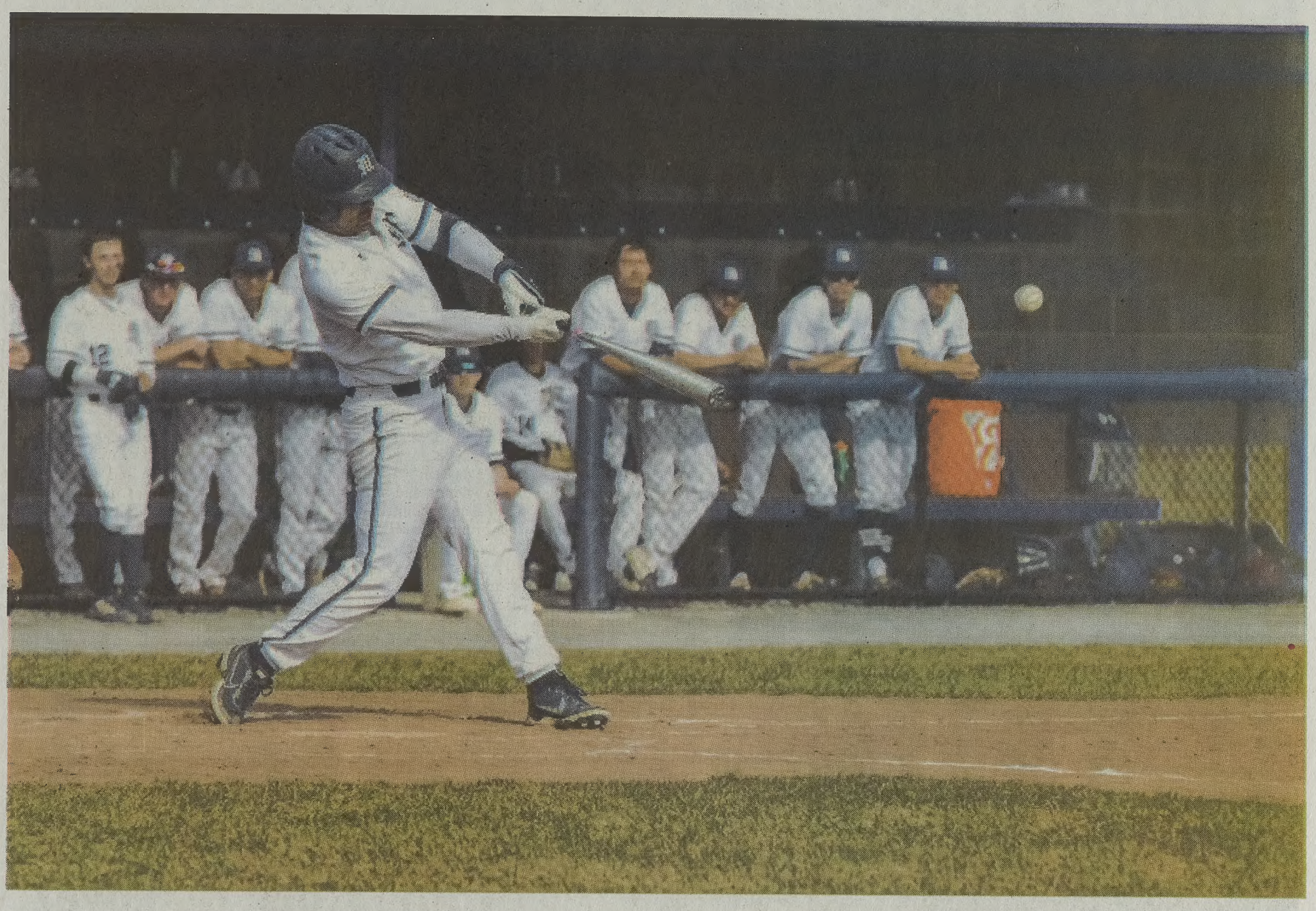
Album: "Landmark" — Hippo Campus

Genre: Indie Rock, Alternative

RIYL: Wallows, COIN, Vampire Weekend, Dayglow

Blurb: The Minnesota-based band Hippo Campus jumped on the indie-pop scene with their bubbly 2017 debut album, "Landmark." From the bouncy lead single "Boyish" to the subtle strums of "Vacation," the album has a soulful range. Their lyrics are playful and colorful, and the album flows well sonically as tracks sometimes melt into each other. Although I haven't loved some of their more recent projects, I always return to this record.

Coach Mike Leonard earns 200th win as men's baseball stays unbeaten at home



Courtesy of Will Costello

Alec Ritch '23 has been a key two-way player for the Panthers this season.

By JACK McGUIRE
Contributing Writer

On a sunny day at Forbes Field, George Goldstein '22 struck out the last batter of the game to secure Middlebury's 6–2 win over Castleton University (6–15–1). Although technically just a non-conference win, for Head Coach Mike Leonard, this game marked something much bigger: his 200th win as Middlebury baseball's head coach.

Leonard was the head baseball coach at Bates College for six years before Middlebury hired him in 2016. Under Leonard's leadership, Middlebury has twice played in the NESCAC championship game and has tied the single-season program record of 26 wins. When reflecting on his 200th win, Leonard attributed much of his success to his players.

"Reflecting, I think about how long I have been doing this and how grateful I am for all the awesome players I have coached," Leonard told The Campus.

This season, Leonard has continued his strong leadership and has a chance to add to his impressive coaching resume. Middlebury has a winning percentage of .683, its highest mark since 2006 when the program had a winning percentage of .711. As a result, Middlebury sits in first place in the NESCAC West Division.

A key part of Middlebury's impressive record has been their stellar play against NESCAC rivals. The Panthers (15–7) are 4–1 in conference play and just completed a three-game series sweep of Williams College (7–13) this past weekend.

"Every NESCAC opponent is really talented, and it's always a challenging game against them," Leonard said. "It forces you to look in the mirror and play your best."

The baseball team's success is also derived from its dominance while playing at home — the team is 8–0 on Forbes Field this season.

"There are a ton of games we travel to where our players grind it out and are certainly ready for any roadtrip, but it is certainly nice to play at home in front of friends and family," Leonard said. "The schedule is nicer when you can sleep-in, and pre-game batting practice feels more like a routine because it's at a place you're used to, so we certainly like being at home and want to play here as much as possible."

> "I have been really impressed with the team's ability to use each game as information and a learning opportunity moving forward."

Offensively, Middlebury has been a juggernaut, frequently scoring double-digit runs. Among players with at least 45 at-bats this year, the Panthers feature six players with an on-base percentage plus slugging percentage (OPS) of at least 1.000. OPS is a frequently used statistic in baseball that measures total offensive output by combining the rate at which a player gets on base with how effectively a player hits for average and power. To put this in perspective, in the Major Leagues, a player with an OPS of at least 1.000 would be a strong candidate to win the Most Valuable Player award.

On the mound, Alex Price '23 and Alex Rosario '23 have led a very solid rotation. Price, through six games started, is 2–2 with a respectable 4.36 earned run average (ERA); he also leads the team with 33 innings pitched. Rosario, also through six games started, leads the team in wins with an impressive record of 5–1 and has a 4.60 ERA through 29.1 innings pitched.

In the bullpen, Goldstein has been a dominant force. In 16.1 innings, he has struck out an impressive 28 batters and with a 1.10 ERA.

However, the team's biggest contributor has been two-way star Alec Ritch '23. Offensively, Ritch leads the team in most statistical categories — he has an OPS of 1.303, a batting average of .414 and four home runs. Ritch has also shown off his speed on the basepaths, recording 20 steals — twice as many as the next highest total on the team — this season while only being caught three times. Ritch has also been a formidable pitcher: He has a 4.85 ERA in 26 innings pitched.

Headed into the tail end of the season, the Panthers know they have to stay focused. Postseason begins in early May.

"I have been really impressed with the team's ability to use each game as information and a learning opportunity moving forward," Leonard said. "Really excited about what we can do the rest of the way."

The Panthers are set to play a three-game series against Amherst College (8–14–1) this weekend at Forbes Field.

Middlebury Club Soccer launches B team

Courtesy of Roni Lezama

Middlebury Club Soccer's B team poses after a jamboree in Potsdam, N.Y. on Saturday, April 2.

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Sports Editor

Following a successful season for both the varsity and club programs in the fall, Middlebury Club Soccer (MCS) has opened its doors for even more players to play competitively with the advent of a "B" team.

Created this spring, Middlebury B played its first competitive game on Saturday, April 2, falling 1–0 to a plucky Clarkson side. The team returned to action the following day for a double header against Syracuse and UVM, losing both. Youness Cheboubi '24 scored the team's only goal.

"We were all really excited for [Youness]," Middlebury B co-founder Roni Lezama '22 said. "He works really hard and loves the sport, so you could definitely say he fits the second team narrative."

> "In the fall, the club team had a fantastic season, but the only problem was that, to stay competitive, we had to have cuts."

The team was largely created in response to massive interest in the club soccer team following its launch in the fall. Seeing the excitement they generated among the school's population, MCS leadership decided their young program was already in need of expansion.

"In the fall, the club team had a fantastic season, but the only problem was that, to stay competitive, we had to have cuts," MCS co-founder Marco Fengler '23 said. "About 100 guys tried out, so we thought we should expand it so more guys could get out there and have a good time."

With Middlebury A taking a roster 25 players deep, the B team took an additional 33, ensuring that the majority of the players who tried out this spring made a competitive team. Staying true to their mission of inclusivity, team co-founders Lezama and Charlie Deichman-Caswell '24 made sure that every one of their 33 players played during their opening weekend of competitive games.

"Despite the losses, we had a big win this weekend," Lezama said. "Our goal was to get the most players on the field as possible, and we did that." Lezama admitted that although the frequent rotation of players may mean the team is less competitive, it allows for more students to get back into the game they love.

> "Despite the losses, we had a big win this weekend. Our goal was to get the most players on the field as possible, and we did that."

Middlebury A returned to competitive play on Saturday, April 9, playing the A and B teams for both Tufts and Harvard. Fengler, Tom Haugen '25, Jonathan Kim '25 and Blaise Seifer '23.5 all scored to help the Panthers to a 2–1–1 record over the course of the weekend.

Middlebury A plays their next game this Sunday, April 24, against Holy Cross, while Middlebury B is next in action on May 1 on South Street Field, playing Hamilton and Dartmouth.

Editor's Note: Blaise Seifer '23.5 is the Senior Sports Editor for The Campus and abstained from editing this piece.

Caroline Harding

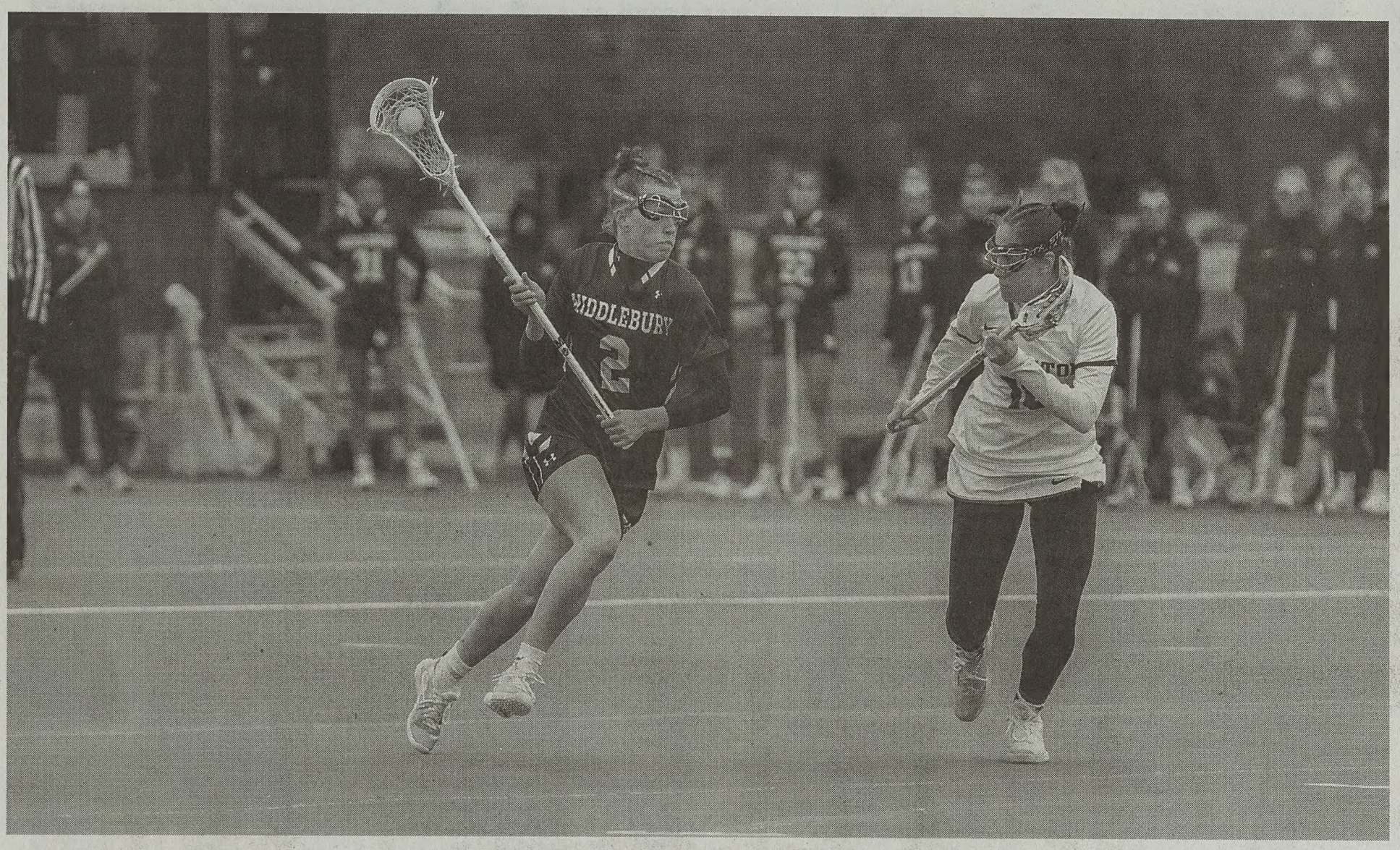
PFL Weekly Ep. 8:

Women's track & field wins meet, men's baseball undefeated at home, women's lacrosse charges past Colby

By BLAISE SIEFER, ELI DIBARI, MARCO FENGLER, CAPTAIN RUDOLPH & CAROLINE HARDING

Women's track & field means business this spring, finishing first out of 20 teams at the Silfen Invitational meet this past weekend. Captain highlights notable individual achievements at this meet, while Eli discusses another team that's on fire: baseball. Meanwhile, Blaise discusses women's lacrosse's victory over nationally-ranked Colby, including an interview with first-year phenom Hope Shue '25. Marco makes another "Marco guarantee" while the rest of the crew begins to question if he can actually predict the future.

Listen to PFL Weekly on Spotify.



Courtesy of Will Costello

Hope Shue '25 (left) has been one of the Panthers' most dominant offensive players this season.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE DOMINATES COLBY, 13–5, IN NESCAC SHOWDOWN

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Staff Writer

Whether there was magic in the air to celebrate the graduating seniors or a laser focus on securing the top seed in the NESCAC, the stars aligned for No. 1 women's lacrosse (13–0) on Saturday in a fiercely anticipated matchup against No. 4 Colby (11–2). In what was expected to be a bloodbath for the conference lead, Middlebury dominated, 13–5, maintaining their perfect season record and taking another step towards NCAAs.

Sophie MacKeigan '22 summed up the win as the team's "most complete game across the board [so far], from offense to defense to goalkeeping to draws."

Jane Earley '23 shattered her own record with a career-high six goals and one assist. After two quick goals by Earley to kick off the first quarter, the Panthers quickly found their rhythm to end the quarter with a 3–1 advantage. The Panthers took off running in the second quarter, shutting out the Colby offense and putting up four goals after Susan Rowley '23, Kelcey Dion '25, and Maggie Coughlin '24 joined Earley and Erin Nicholas '22 on the board.

Despite a pair of quick goals from the Mules in the third quarter and two more in the fourth, tallies from Grace Getman '22, Anna Spehr '25, and Nicholas, in the second half, secured the commanding win. Coupled with an offense on fire, the Panthers showed no signs of weakness with goalie Gina Driscoll '24 in the net, who totaled eight saves.

> "We are always looking to be more creative and more dynamic on the field, and the culture that we have created here makes everyone confident to try something new."

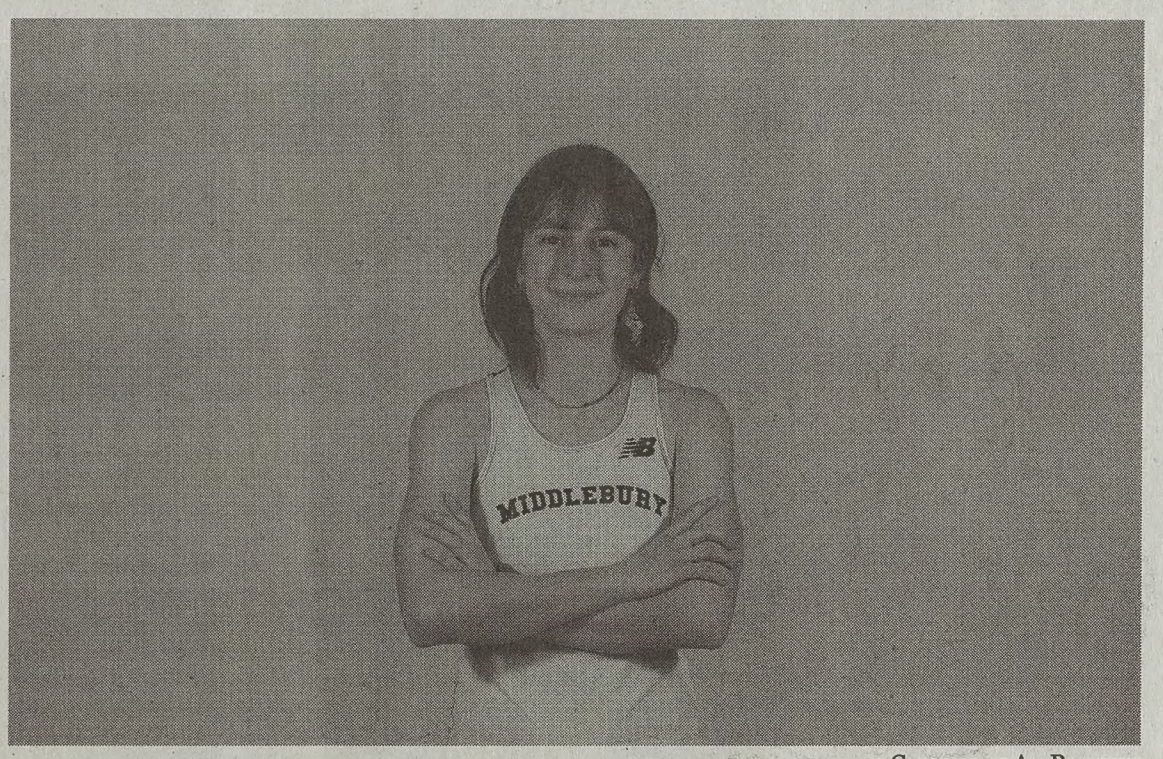
The Panthers offense and defense ran like well-oiled machines this weekend, but according to Coughlin, the chemistry off the field was just as critical. Reflecting on the team's success so far Coughlin cited the collective trust, hustle and composure as the keys to the cohesiveness that sets them apart from their competitors.

"We are always looking to be more creative and more dynamic on the field, and the culture that we have created here makes everyone confident to try something new," Coughlin said.

Looking ahead, women's lacrosse remains hungry for hardware at the end of the season. With the postseason on the horizon, the team continues to exude level-headedness and confidence. Like many of her teammates, Coughlin is looking forward to taking their last regular season games one at a time, and when the post season rolls around, knows the team will be excited and ready for top-notch competition.

After a killer showing this weekend in honor of the Class of 2022, women's lacrosse is worth keeping your eyes on. Up next, the Panthers travel to No. 19 Amherst (9–4) on April 23, then conclude their season with a road matchup against Williams (4–7) on April 27. Game times are 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., respectively.

Seven Questions with Charlie Keohane '24, women's track & field



Courtesy of Ali Paquette

Charlie Keohane '24 poses during media day.

By RYAN HEINZERLING
Contributing Writer

Charlie Keohane '24, from Lafayette, CA, is a sophomore on women's track and field. She most often runs the 100m and 200m and was named a NESCAC All-Academic for the 2021–2022 season. In this installment of "Seven Questions," Keohane discusses her beginnings with track, why she chose Middlebury and her least favorite building on campus.

Ryan Heinzerling: How'd you get into track?

Charlie Keohane: It's a funny story because my parents told me I had to join a sports team in middle school, and I delayed joining one until the spring. Once the spring rolled around, I looked around the sports and decided to go for track since I'm not tall or coordinated enough for many other sports. Nine years later, I'm still running track!

RH: Why Middlebury?

CK: Coming from the West Coast, I really wanted a significant change of scenery and geography. I knew I wanted a small liberal arts college, and as an Environmental Studies major, I was very attracted to Middlebury. The mountain views are majestic and I feel so lucky to be in such a beautiful place! This place attracts so many wonderful people and I've been lucky to meet some great friends. I'm actually a walk-on to the track team, so it's fun that it worked out!

RH: How are you feeling about the season so far? Any goals?

CK: I really enjoyed my first ever indoor season this past winter. I had Covid between indoor and outdoor, so it's been a little difficult coming back from that, but I'm looking forward to making the most of the outdoor season and enjoying the sunshine. At the end of the day, I'm just competing against myself and my own times. My main goals [are] to stay focused on improving my technique and strength, have fun, and be a supportive teammate. It's been especially fun to get closer to the first-years and watch them grow over the season.

RH: What goes into prepping for a meet?

CK: Prepping for the meet is both physical and mental. I always try to get a lot of sleep, stay hydrated and eat some carbs the night before. I get very anxious before a race, so I just try to focus on staying calm, focusing on my breathing, and keeping a positive attitude. My parents often text me words of affirmation before a meet which gives me a nice boost of confidence. It's crazy how much stress goes into such a short and fast race, but it's exhilarating!

RH: Favorite memory of being on track so far?

CK: Going to the David Hemery Valentine Invitational meet at Boston University over February break. It was my first away indoor meet and first time running on a banked track. There were so many Division I teams there [along with] my best track friend from high school who runs for Tufts, which was a crazy "worlds collide" moment. I had a blast on the banked track and [set personal records] in both the 60-meter dash and the 200. The overall energy was electric!

RH: Favorite professional track athlete?

CK: Allyson Felix. She's an incredible athlete and I really admire that she can run anything from a 100 to 400-meter race. She is so versatile and strong across the board, individually and on a relay team.

RH: Least favorite building on campus?

CK: This is potentially a hot take, but my least favorite building on campus is the Ross Complex. I don't think it has as much character as other dorms on campus, and I find the hallways dark, confusing and claustrophobic. However, I'll make an exception for Ross Dining Hall during golden hour.

MUSICIANS AT MIDD: CONVERSATIONS WITH YAWNY, JOCULAR WILLIAM AND MICKMASTER FRESH

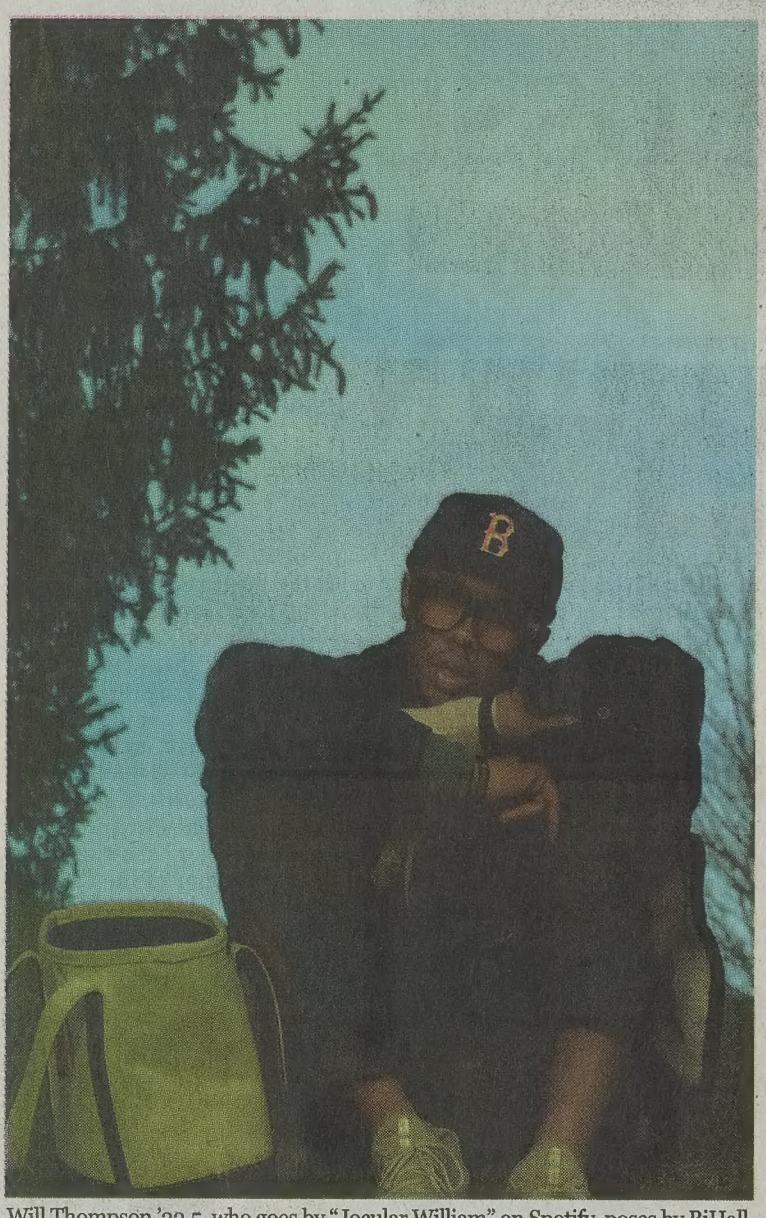
By DEVIN SANTIKARMA
Photojournalist

For this photo essay, I wanted to spend time with students who identify as musicians here at Middlebury, a place with a rich musical history extending from Tony-award winning Anaïs Mitchell '04 to the infamous viral "MiddKid" music video. Though hailing from different backgrounds and styles, they are all brought together by their love and passion for music.

Yon Bui '25 (he/they) is a nineteen year old musician from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a town where the music scene is, in his words, "pretty much non-existent." A child of immigrant parents, he recalls his first musical memories as a toddler with a makeshift drum kit of pots and pans and hearing traditional Vietnamese songs in the car. Though he plays the flute, guitar and drums, he finds singing to be his main medium of musical expression.

Continue to B

Yon Bui '25, known by the stage name "yawnny," released his first single on Spotify last spring.



Will Thompson '22.5, who goes by "Jocular William" on Spotify, poses by BiHall.

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"I found this karaoke app that would allow me to sing over Bruno Mars songs, and I shared these corny videos as a kid with my family," he recalled. "It was a really good way of developing my voice."

Yon released his debut single, "Wallowing," under the name "yawnny" on Spotify last spring. He shared a demo of a joji-inspired track written after a breakup with two friends, who then helped produce the song, developing it further with trap drums and vocal effects."It was heartwarming when I came here and people told me they had listened to my music," he said. "There was even someone who recognized my song because his friend found it from Spotify. We Facetimed him and I was like 'It's me!' and he freaked out."

Yon says he definitely finds inspiration from other musicians at Midd. "All the songwriters here are so incredibly talented." he explained "I'm especially inspired by their approach to lyrics. I try my best to write in ways where I can say what I want to say but in a poetic way." Yon is excited to release more music this year under "yawnny" and to keep performing, whether it be belting songs with his band "Les Bruns Jams" (pronounced "LeBron James") or "cheesing" behind the drumset at W.O.M.P.

"Music hierarchies are dumb! Listen to what you like," he said at the end of the interview.

Continue to C

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Will Thompson '22.5 (he/him) is a musician hailing from Newton, Massachusetts. His stage name, "Jocular William" came from his first- year English class, after discovering the word "jocular."

"I saw the vocab word and thought it encompassed me as an individual. I have a rather proper name, Will Thompson III, so the name reminds me to be my goofy, authentic self," he said. Though his rap name may be goofy, his talent and commitment is undeniably serious. Seeing him perform live is like watching one man erupt into a wall of sound, gripping his mic and spitting verses with even more energy while performing live than one experiences during his abundantly-produced songs on Spotify.

When I asked him how he got so comfortable as a performer, he recalled his earliest memory of hearing "Lean Back" by Fat Joe in his family van.

"I was a menace back then, so my babysitter kept me in the back of the van, and I heard the song and was rocking with it, doing the dance and all," he said. "Then, I started rewriting lyrics to Eminem songs which taught me to create my own tracks."

His choice to continue his music career upon going to college was something he describes as "divine intervention."

"My roommate Max just happened to be a singer and my producer Phin lived down the hall from me. They're both pursuing music, so that kind of showed me: Hey, I can still do this," he said. In addition to being a successful rapper, Jocular William stands out among other Middlebury musicians solely based on how much effort he has put into fostering a community around his music, throwing concerts, pop-up shops and planning a comedy show. Even with communal support though, he has also been met with people who initially don't vibe with his mission. "I think it's ballsy to say 'I'm going to be a rapper,' and sometimes it rubs people the wrong way. People are gonna feel some sort of way about you. Especially at a P.W.I. I'm representing my race in a way, so everything I do is double-scrutinized."

Regarding what he's planning next, he tells me he wants to drop a project May 7 and possibly celebrate the Middlebury spring concert with a performance of his own. When asked for anything he wants to emphasize at the end of our interview, he tells me "I don't really see myself as a crazy artist or anything. Like, I'm just a guy; I'm not too special."

Mickey Feeney '23.5 (he/him) is a 21-year-old from Concord, Massachusetts. His background as a musician was probably fate, according to him.

"My mom took me to a psychic when I was young, and she read my palms and told her that drums would play a big role in my life," he said.

Even without a psychic though, one could imagine that with a family musical background including an Juilliard-trained professional upright bassist, a harmonica player, and an opera-singing sister who performed at the San Francisco opera, Mickey was also destined for a musical path.

"My first musical obsession was reggae," Mickey told me. "I loved the rhythm, the ambiance of the genre. It motivated me to develop my own vocabulary on the drumset and dive into my craft." Watching Mickey practice drums in an empty Gamut Room, his skill is beyond evident, effortlessly switching hands and styles like some drum machine, lankiness and all.

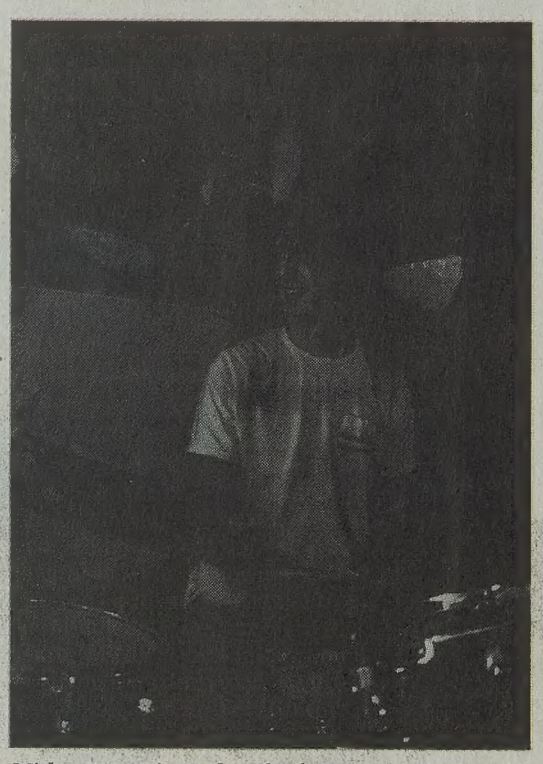
Mickey's mastering of his craft was something he's been working towards from a young age.

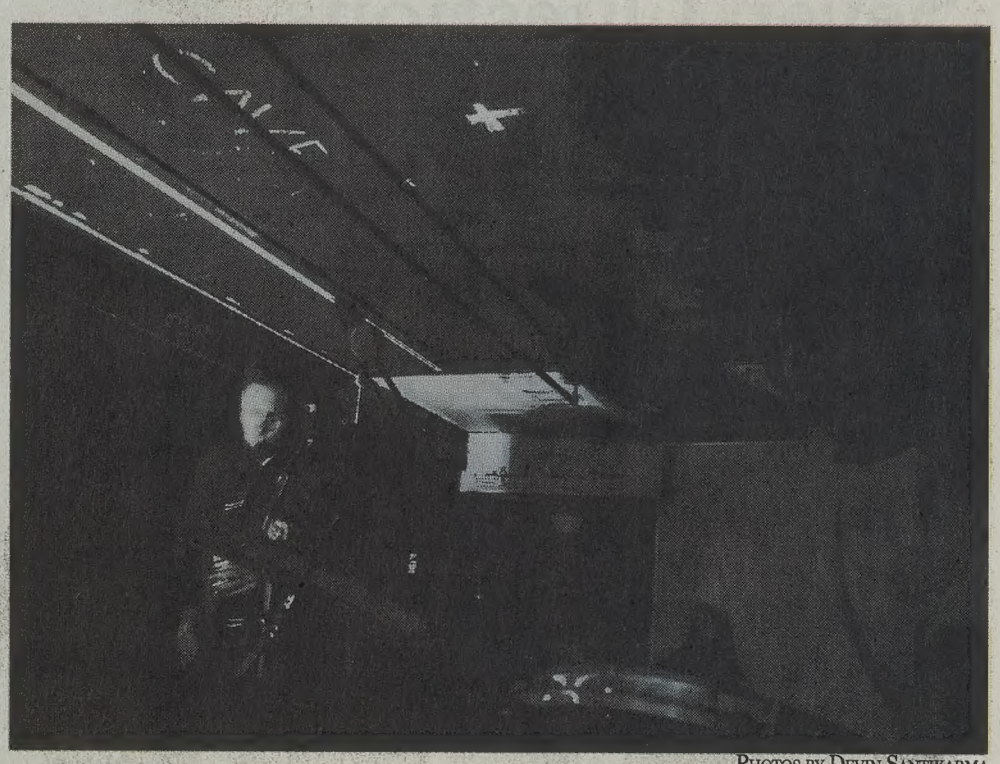
"My parents found me a talented, well-read drum teacher who exposed me to so much incredible music," he said. "The funny thing is, a lot of good music teachers are kind of mean, and if they see potential they'll push you farther than you would've thought possible." He laughs when I describe this scene as something out of the movie Whiplash. "For real, though!"

Arriving at Middlebury, he joined the Sound Investment jazz ensemble, where he was immediately put in first chair. "When I arrived I thought that the music scene here was dead, but it was really only dead because of Covid-19. This fall, there was such a revival of Middlebury's music scene," Mickey said.

Mickey's favorite music is music that strikes him as, above all else, authentic. "Thelonious Monk and Bladee, I know it sounds crazy, they have so much in common," Mickey said. "People didn't know what to make of their art at the time because they were offering new visions of the world that they saw as true."

Even with Mickey's undisputable musical chops performing with bands such as "Flo State," he also appreciates an approach to music that is more informal and fun. This probably explains that though being a jazz aficionado, he also releases Soundcloud songs under the rap alias "MickMaster Fresh." "For me, above all, music is about taking your convictions about life and putting that out into the world, and seeing if that resonates with anyone, anywhere," he said.





Mickey Feeney '23.5 plays the drums at a WOMP performance.

PHOTOS BY DEVIN SANTIKARMA